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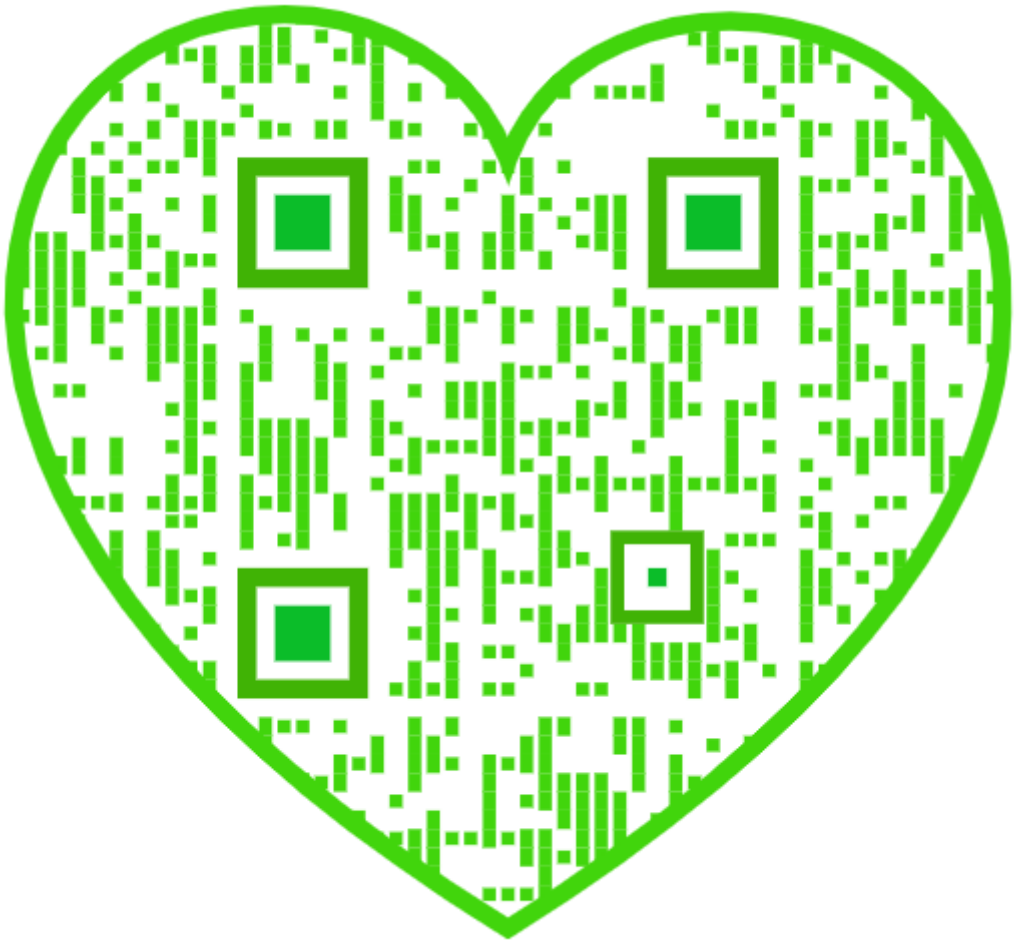

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Fox-hunting :
'Forrard away'

WITH HORSE AND HOUND

FROM

BRITISH SPORT PAST AND PRESENT

BY

E. D. CUMING

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

G. DENHOLM ARMOUR

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

FOX-HUNTING 1

'ODE TO THE NORTH-EAST WIND' 30

CHAPTER II

STAG-HUNTING 31

'THE LORD OF THE VALLEY' 41

CHAPTER III

HARE-HUNTING 43

CHAPTER IV

OTTER-HUNTING 58

CHAPTER V

COACHING 66

'SONG OF THE B.D.C.' 91

CHAPTER VI

PAGE

TANDEM DRIVING 92

CHAPTER VII

POLO 95

CHAPTER VIII

RACING 108

CHAPTER IX

STEEPLE-CHASING 120

ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR

I

FOX-HUNTING . . . . . *Frontispiece*

'Forrard away.'

II

PAGE

FOXHOUNDS, SHOWING ROUNDED AND UNROUNDED EAR 8

III

FOX-HUNTING 16

The Vale.

IV

FOX-HUNTING 24

Jumping the Brook.

V

STAG-HUNTING 32

Stag on Hill.

VI

PAGE

STAG-HUNTING 40

Stag in Water.

VII

HARE-HUNTING 48

An Old-fashioned Huntsman.

VIII

OTTER HUNTING 64

Hounds Marking at a Holt.

IX

THE STAGE COACH 72

Old Times.

X

MAIL COACHES RACING 74

Something Wrong with the Opposition Coach.

XI

COACHING. AN AMATEUR DRIVER IN DAYS OF THE 'WHIP CLUB' 78

ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR

XII

PAGE

MODERN COACHING 88

In the Show Ring.

XIII

TANDEM 96

XIV

POLO 104

XV

RACING IN OLD TIMES 112

Between the Heats.

XVI

MODERN RACING 120

The Starting Gate.

XVII

STEEPLE-CHASING 128

FOX-HUNTING

'FOX-HUNTING,' wrote Beckford in 1787, 'is now become the amusement of *gentlemen*: nor need any gentleman be ashamed of it.'

Time had been when fox-hunting and fox-hunters lay under social ban. Lord Chesterfield kindly bore testimony to the good intentions of him who followed the hounds, but could say little else in his favour: in the days of Queen Anne a 'fox-hunter,' in the esteem of some, meant a boor or something very like it; but the slighting significance attaching to the word must surely have become only a memory long ere Beckford wrote.

There is, however, room for doubt whether fox-hunting in its early days was the amusement of others than gentlemen, and whether any such were ever ashamed of it. William the Third hunted with the Charlton in Sussex, inviting thither foreign visitors of distinction; and Charlton continued to be the Melton of England in the days of Queen Anne and the two first Georges, for fox-hunting was the fashion. Harrier men maintain that their sport was reckoned the higher in these times; but, I venture to think, harrier men are mistaken. Read this,[1] dated 14th July 1730, from Sir Robert Walpole to the Earl of Carlisle:—

'I am to acquaint your Lordship that upon the old Establishment of the Crown there have usually been a Master of the Buckhounds and a Master of the Harriers. The first is now enjoyed by Colonel Negus; the latter is vacant, and if your Lordship thinks it more agreeable to be Master of the Foxhounds, the King has no objection to the style or name of

[1] Letters of Sir Robert Walpole, *Hist. MSS. Comm.*

the office; but, as the Master of the Harriers is an ancient and known office, thinks it may be better if your Lordship takes the addition of Foxhounds, and the office to be called Master of Foxhounds and Harriers, which his Majesty is willing to grant to your Lordship with the salary of £2000 for yourself, deputy, and all charges attending the same.'

Lord Carlisle would not have sought the title of M.F.H. had that of M.H. carried the greater consideration.

May it not be that eighteenth-century hare-hunting owes something of the prestige it has enjoyed in the eyes of posterity to William Somerville? Might we not have seen fox-hunting in somewhat different light had that been the theme of *The Chace*? Perhaps, unconsciously, we attach to the sport the supremacy that has never been denied the poem; whereby fox-hunting, lacking a chronicler, is thrown out of its true perspective.

When the chronicler arrived he was worthy of the office. This, his picture of a hunt,[1] shows him a hound man above all things:—

'. . . Now let your huntsman throw in his hounds as quietly as he can, and let the two whippers-in keep wide of him on either side, so that a single hound may not escape them; let them be attentive to his halloo, and be ready to encourage, or rate, as that directs; he will, of course, draw up the wind, for reasons which I shall give in another place.—Now, if you can keep your brother sportsmen in order, and put any discretion into them, you are in luck; they more frequently do harm than good: if it be possible, persuade those who wish to halloo the fox off, to stand quiet under the cover-side, and on no account to halloo him too soon; if they do, he most certainly will turn back again: could you entice them all into the cover, your sport, in all probability, would not be the worse for it.

'How well the hounds spread the cover! The huntsman, you see, is quite deserted, and his horse, who so lately had a crowd at his heels, has not now one attendant left. How

[1] Beckford's frequent quotations from *The Chace* are omitted.

steadily they draw! you hear not a single hound, yet none of them are idle. Is not this better than to be subject to continual disappointment from the eternal babbling of unsteady hounds?

'How musical their tongues!—And as they get nearer to him how the chorus fills!—Hark! he is found—Now, where are all your sorrows, and your cares, ye gloomy souls! Or where your pains and aches, ye complaining ones! one halloo has dispelled them all.—What a crash they make! and echo seemingly takes pleasure to repeat the sound. The astonished traveller forsakes his road, lured by its melody; the listening plowman now stops his plow; and every distant shepherd neglects his flock, and runs to see him break.—What joy; what eagerness in every face!

'Mark how he runs the cover's utmost limits, yet dares not venture forth; the hounds are still too near!—That check is lucky!—Now, if our friends head him not, he will soon be off—hark! they halloo: by G—d he 's gone! Now, huntsman, get on with the head hounds; the whipper-in will bring on the others after you: keep an attentive eye on the leading hounds, that should the scent fail them, you may know at least how far they brought it. Mind *Galloper*, how he leads them!—It is difficult to distinguish which is first, they run in such a style; yet *he* is the foremost hound.—The goodness of his nose is not less excellent than his speed:—how he carries the scent! and when he loses it, see how eagerly he slings to recover it again!—There—now he 's at head again!—See how they top the hedge!—Now, how they mount the hill!—Observe what a head they carry, and shew me, if thou canst, one shuffler or skirter amongst them all; are they not like a parcel of brave fellows, who, when they engage in an undertaking, determine to share its fatigues and its dangers, equally amongst them? It was, then, the fox I saw, as we came down the hill;—those crows directed me which way to look, and the sheep ran from him as he passed along. The hounds are now on the very spot, yet the sheep stop them not, for they dash beyond them. Now see with

what eagerness they cross the plain !—*Galloper* no longer keeps his place, *Brusher* takes it.—See how he slings for the scent, and how impetuously he runs ! how eagerly he took the lead, and how he strives to keep it—yet *Victor* comes up apace.—He reaches him !—See what an excellent race it is between them !—It is doubtful which will reach the cover first.—How equally they run !—how eagerly they strain ! Now, *Victor*—*Victor !*—Ah ! *Brusher*, you are beaten ; *Victor* first tops the hedge.—See there ! see how they all take it in their strokes ! the hedge cracks with their weight, so many jump at once.

' Now hastes the whipper-in to the other side of the cover ; he is right unless he head the fox.

' Listen ! the hounds have turned. They are now in two parts : the fox has been headed back, and we have changed at last. Now, my lad, mind the huntsman's halloo, and stop to those hounds which he encourages. He is right !—that, doubtless, is the hunted fox.—Now they are off again. Ha ! a check.—Now for a moment's patience !—We press too close upon the hounds !—Huntsman, stand still ! as they want you not.—How admirably they spread ! how wide they cast ! Is there a single hound that does not try ? If there be, ne'er shall he hunt again. There, *Trueman* is on the scent—he feathers, yet still is doubtful—'tis right ! How readily they join him ! See those wide-casting hounds, how they fly forward to recover the ground they have lost !—Mind *Lightning*, how she dashes ; and *Mungo*, how he works ! Old *Frantic* too, now pushes forward ; she knows as well as we the fox is sinking.

' Huntsman ! at fault at last ? How far did you bring the scent ?—Have the hounds made their own cast ?—Now make yours. You see that sheep-dog has coursed the fox :—get forward with your hounds, and make a wide cast.

' Hark ! that halloo is indeed a lucky one.—If we can hold him on, we may yet recover him ; for a fox so much distressed must stop at last. We shall now see if they will hunt as well as run ; for there is but little scent, and the impending cloud

still makes that little less. How they enjoy the scent!—See how busy they all are, and how each in his turn prevails. Huntsman! Huntsman! be quiet! Whilst the scent was good, you pressed on your hounds; it was well done: when they came to a check you stood still, and interrupted them not; they were afterwards at fault: you made your cast with judgment and lost no time. You now must let them hunt;—with such a cold scent as this you can do no good; they must do it all themselves; lift them now, and not a hound will stoop again.—Ha! a high road, at such a time as this, when the tenderest-nosed hound can hardly own the scent!—Another fault! That man at work there, has headed back the fox. Huntsman! cast not your hounds now, you see they have over-run the scent; have a little patience, and let them, for once, try back. We must now give them time;—see where they bend towards yonder furze brake—I wish he may have stopped there!—Mind that old hound, how he dashes o'er the furze; I think he winds him.—Now for a fresh *entapis*! Hark! they halloo! Aye, there he goes. It is nearly over with him; had the hounds caught view he must have died.—He will hardly reach the cover; see how they gain upon him at every stroke! It is an admirable race! yet the cover saves him. Now be quiet, and he cannot escape us; we have the wind of the hounds, and cannot be better placed:—how short he runs!—he is now in the very strongest part of the cover.—What a crash! every hound is in, and every hound is running for him. That was a quick turn! Again another!—he 's put to his last shifts.—Now *Mischief* is at his heels, and death is not far off.—Ha! they all stop at once: all silent, and yet no earth is open. Listen! now they are at him again! Did you hear that hound catch him? They over-ran the scent, and the fox had laid down behind them. Now, Reynard, look to yourself! How quick they all give their tongues!—little *Dreadnought*, how he works him! the terriers too, they are now squeaking at him. —How close *Vengeance* pursues! how terribly she presses!—it is just up with him! Gods! what a crash they make; the

whole wood resounds!—That turn was very short!—There!—now!—aye, now they have him! Who—hoop!' . . .

The practice of trailing up to the fox had been, by some masters at least, abandoned at this time. Beckford drew a covert in the modern style, though he would have us at the covert-side by sunrise.

Colonel John Cook, Master of the Essex 1808-1813, suggests that the practice of meeting at sunrise was adopted with the definite purpose of hunting the fox before he was in running trim, or the slow hounds of an older generation would never have caught him.[1] However this may be, the system of meeting soon after sunrise and trailing up to the fox continued in the New Forest during the earlier years of the nineteenth century, and is still pursued by the fox-hunters of the Fells, and in Wales: and these latter do not find their foxes unable to run in the early morning. When Colonel Cook wrote, in 1829, the sunrise meet had been generally renounced: 'The breed of hounds, the feeding, and the whole system is so much improved that the majority of foxes are found and killed . . . after twelve o'clock.'

There was, it must be said, at least one among the improvements the Colonel did not regard as such: to wit, the second horse system, which by this time had been commonly adopted, no doubt as a result of the greater speed of hounds. It was introduced by Lord Sefton during his Mastership (1800-1802) of the Quorn. Lord Sefton was a heavy weight, but his example was speedily followed by those who had not burthen of flesh to excuse them.

The sporting ethics of a century ago were lenient on the subject of bagmen. It would seem from this note, culled from the *Sporting Magazine* of 1807, that if the owner of a pack wanted to hunt any particular district, and foxes hap-

[1] They certainly required time to catch their fox on occasion: witness the famous Charlton run of 26th January 1738: hounds found a vixen at 7.45 A.M. and killed her at 5.50 P.M., having covered a distance conscientiously affirmed to be 58 miles 2 furlongs 10 yards.

pened to be scarce therein, he might temporarily stock the country without reproach :—

'Mr. Fermor's excellent pack is come, or coming at the end of this month (December), from his seat in Oxfordshire to Epsom, for the purpose of hunting there during the remainder of the season. The gentlemen of Surrey expect much sport, as Mr. Fermor will turn out a great number of bagged foxes.'

When Squire Osbaldeston hunted in Suffolk, season 1822-3, Mr. E. H. Budd used to buy half-grown foxes for him from Hopkins in Tottenham Court Road, at thirty shillings a brace, and send them down in a covered cart, ten or twelve brace at a time.

It was very usual to turn out a bagman for a day's sport; and such a fox often gave a much better run than the practice deserved. On 18th December 1905 the Master of the Chester Harriers had a bag fox turned out in Common Wood at a quarter-past twelve : he was given five minutes' law, was run to ground at Pick Hill, was bolted, and thereafter stood up before hounds till dark, when ' hounds were called off by the New Mills near Whitchurch. The whole chase is computed to be upwards of forty miles as the crow flies, and with scarcely a check.' Mention of bag foxes recalls a comical story told of Tom Hills, the famous Old Surrey huntsman. He was carrying home, in the capacious pocket of his blouse, a fox he had been sent to buy in Leadenhall market. Stopped by a highwayman on Streatham Common, he responded to the demand for his money by bidding his assailant help himself from the pocket which contained the fox : and while the highwayman was bewailing his severely bitten fingers, Hills made his escape.

Long runs are frequently reported in the *Sporting Magazine* during the first decades of the nineteenth century. On Friday, 7th December 1804, Mr. Corbet's hounds found near Wellesbourne pastures, ran their fox for three hours with one five minutes' check, and killed—nay, ' most delightfully ran into ' him at Weston, about a mile from Broadway : a sixteen-mile

point. Of a field of nearly a hundred 'eager amateurs of fox-hunting,' fifteen were up or in view at the kill.

Nimrod's classic, best known as his 'Quarterly,' essay, by reason of its publication in that Review in 1832, gives us as vivid and spirited a picture of fox-hunting as we could wish :—

'. . . Let us suppose ourselves to have been at Ashby Pasture, in the Quorn country, with Mr. Osbaldeston's hounds, in the year 1826, when that pack was at the height of its well-merited celebrity. Let us also indulge ourselves with a fine morning in the first week of February, and at least two hundred well-mounted men by the cover's side. Time being called—say a quarter past eleven, nearly our great-grandfathers' dinner hour—the hounds approach the furze-brake, or the gorse, as it is called in that region. "*Hark in, hark!*" with a slight cheer, and perhaps one wave of his cap, says Mr. Osbaldeston,[1] who long hunted his own pack, and in an instant he has not a hound at his horse's heels. In a very short time the gorse appears shaken in various parts of the cover—apparently from an unknown cause, not a single hound being for some minutes visible. Presently one or two appear, leaping over some old furze which they cannot push through, and exhibit to the field their glossy skins and spotted sides. "Oh, you beauties!" exclaims some old Meltonian, rapturously fond of the sport. Two minutes more elapse; another hound slips out of cover, and takes a short turn outside, with his nose to the ground and his stern lashing his side—thinking, no doubt, he might touch on a drag, should Reynard have been abroad in the night. Hounds have no business to *think*, *thinks* the second whipper-in, who observes him; but one crack of his whip, with "Rasselas, Rasselas, where are you going, Rasselas? *Get to cover, Rasselas*"; and Rasselas immediately disappears. Five minutes more pass away. "No fox here," says one. "Don't be in a hurry," cries Mr. Cradock,[2] "they are drawing

[1] Master from 1817 to 1821, and again from 1823 to 1827.

[2] This gentleman resided within the limits of the Quorn hunt, and kindly superintended the management of the covers. He has lately paid the debt of nature (Author's note).

Foxhounds, showing Rounded and Unrounded Ear

it beautifully, and there is rare lying in it." These words are scarcely uttered, when the cover shakes more than ever. Every stem appears alive, and it reminds us of a corn-field waving in the wind. In two minutes the sterns of some more hounds are seen flourishing above the gorse. "*Have at him there,*" holloas the Squire,[1] the gorse still more alive, and hounds leaping over each other's backs. "*Have at him there again,* my good hounds; a fox for a hundred!" reiterates the Squire, putting his finger in his ear, and uttering a scream which, not being set to music, we cannot give here. Jack Stevens (the first whipper-in) looks at his watch. At this moment John White, Val. Maher, Frank Holyoake (who will pardon us for giving them their *noms-de-chasse*), and two or three more of the fast ones, are seen creeping gently on towards a point at which they think it probable he may break. "Hold hard there," says a sportsman; but he might as well speak to the winds. "Stand still, gentlemen; *pray* stand still," exclaims the huntsman; he might as well say so to the sun. During the time we have been speaking of, all the field have been awake—gloves put on—cigars thrown away—the bridle-reins gathered well up into the hand, and hats pushed down upon the brow.

'At this interesting period, a Snob, just arrived from a very *rural* country, and unknown to any one, but determined to witness the start, gets into a conspicuous situation: "Come away, sir!" holloas the master (little suspecting that the Snob may be nothing less than one of the Quarterly Reviewers). "What mischief are you doing there? Do you think *you* can catch the fox?" A breathless silence ensues. At length a whimper is heard in the cover—like the voice of a dog in a dream: it is Flourisher, and the Squire cheers him to the echo.

'In an instant a hound challenges—and another—and another. 'Tis enough. "*Tally-ho!*" cries a countryman in a tree. "He's gone," exclaims Lord Alvanley; and, clapping his spurs to his horse, in an instant is in the front rank.

[1] Mr. Osbaldeston was popularly called 'Squire' Osbaldeston.

'As all good sportsmen would say, "'Ware, hounds!" cries Sir Harry Goodricke. "Give them time," exclaims Mr. John Moore. "That's right," says Mr. Osbaldeston, "spoil your own sport as usual." "*Go along*," roars out Mr. Holyoake, "there are three couple of hounds on the scent." "That's your sort," says "Billy Coke," [1] coming up at the rate of thirty miles an hour on Advance, with a label pinned on his back, "SHE KICKS"; "the rest are all coming, and there's a rare scent to-day, I'm sure."

'Bonaparte's Old Guard, in its best days, would not have stopped such men as these, so long as life remained in them. Only those who have witnessed it can know in what an extraordinary manner hounds that are left behind in a cover make their way through a crowd, and get up to leading ones of a pack, which have been fortunate in getting away with their fox. It is true they possess the speed of a race-horse; still nothing short of their high mettle could induce them to thread their way through a body of horsemen going the best pace with the prospect of being ridden over and maimed at every stride they take. But, as Beckford observes, "'Tis the dash of the foxhound which distinguishes him." A turn, however, in their favour, or a momentary loss of scent in the few hounds that have shot ahead—an occurrence to be looked for on such occasions—joins head and tail together, and the scent being good, every hound settles to his fox; the pace gradually improves; *vires acquirit eundo*; *a terrible burst is the result!*

'At the end of nineteen minutes the hounds come to a fault, and for a moment the fox has a chance; in fact, they have been pressed upon by the horses, and have rather overrun the scent. "What a pity," says one. "What a shame!" cries another; alluding, perhaps, to a young one, who would and could have gone still faster. "You may thank yourselves for this," exclaims Osbaldeston, well up at the time, Ashton [2]

[1] Said to be the designer of the 'billy-cock' hat.

[2] Mr. Osbaldeston sold Ashton to Lord Plymouth for four hundred guineas after having ridden him six seasons (Author's note).

looking fresh; but only fourteen men out of the two hundred are to be counted; all the rest *coming*. At one blast of the horn, the hounds are back to the point at which the scent has failed, Jack Stevens being in his place to turn them. "*Yo doit! Pastime!*" says the Squire, as she feathers her stern down the hedge-row, looking more beautiful than ever. She speaks! "Worth a thousand, by Jupiter!" cries John White, looking over his left shoulder as he sends both spurs into Euxton, delighted to see only four more of the field are up. Our Snob, however, is amongst them. He has "gone a good one," and his countenance is expressive of delight, as he urges his horse to his speed to get again into a front place.

'The pencil of the painter is now wanting; and unless the painter should be a sportsman, even his pencil would be worth little. What a country is before him!—what a panorama does it represent! Not a field of less than forty—some a hundred acres—and no more signs of the plough than in the wilds of Siberia. See the hounds in a body that might be covered by a damask table-cloth—every stern down, and every head up, for there is no need of stooping, the scent lying breast-high. But the crash!—the music!—how to describe these? Reader, there is no crash now, and not much music. It is the tinker that makes great noise over a little work, but at the pace these hounds are going there is no time for babbling. Perchance one hound in five may throw his tongue as he goes to inform his comrades, as it were, that the villain is on before them, and most musically do the light notes of Vocal and Venus fall on the ear of those who may be within reach to catch them. But who is so fortunate in this second burst, nearly as terrible as the first? Our fancy supplies us again, and we think we could name them all. If we look to the left, nearly abreast of the pack, we see six men going gallantly, and quite as straight as the hounds themselves are going; and on the right are four more, riding equally well, though the former have rather the best of it, owing to having had the inside of the hounds at the last two turns, which must be placed to the

chapter of accidents. A short way in the rear, by no means too much so to enjoy this brilliant run, are the rest of the *élite* of the field, who had come up at the first check; and a few who, thanks to the goodness of their steeds, and their determination to be with the hounds, appear as if dropped from the clouds. Some, however, begin to show symptoms of distress. Two horses are seen loose in the distance—a report is flying about that one of the field is badly hurt, and something is heard of a collar-bone being broken, others say it is a leg; but the pace is *too good* to inquire. A cracking of rails is now heard, and one gentleman's horse is to be seen resting, nearly balanced, across one of them, his rider being on his back in the ditch, which is on the landing side. "Who is he?" says Lord Brudenel[1] to Jack Stevens. "Can't tell, my Lord; but I thought it was a queerish place when I came o'er it before him." It is evidently a case of peril, but the pace is *too good* to afford help.

'Up to this time, Snob has gone quite in the first flight; the "dons" begin to eye him, and when an opportunity offers, the question is asked, "Who is that fellow on the little bay horse?" "Don't know him," says Mr. *Little* Gilmour (a fourteen-stone Scotchman, by-the-by), ganging gallantly to his hounds. "He can ride," exclaims Lord Rancliffe. "A tip-top provincial, depend upon it," added Lord Plymouth, going quite at his ease on a thorough-bred nag, three stone above his weight, and in perfect racing trim. Animal nature, however, will cry "enough," how good soever she may be, if unreasonable man press her beyond the point. The line of scent lies right athwart a large grass ground (as a field is termed in Leicestershire), somewhat on the ascent; abounding in ant-hills, or hillocks, peculiar to old grazing land, and thrown up by the plough, some hundred years since, into rather high ridges, with deep, holding furrows between each. The fence at the top is impracticable—Meltonicè, "a stopper"; nothing for it but a gate, leading into a broad green lane, high and

[1] Afterwards Lord Cardigan.

strong, with deep, slippery ground on each side of it. "Now for the timber-jumper," cries Osbaldeston, pleased to find himself upon Ashton. "For Heaven's sake, take care of my hounds, in case they may throw up in the lane." Snob is here in the best of company, and that moment perhaps the happiest of his life; but, not satisfied with his situation, wishing to out-Herod Herod, and to have a fine story to tell when he gets home, he pushes to his speed on ground on which all regular Leicestershire men are careful, and the death-warrant of the little bay horse is signed. It is true he gets first to the gate, and has no idea of opening it; sees it contains five new and strong bars, that will neither bend nor break; has a great idea of a fall, but no idea of refusing; presses his hat firmly on his head, and gets his whip-hand at liberty to give the good little nag a refresher; but all at once he perceives it will not do. When attempting to collect him for the effort, he finds his mouth dead and his neck stiff; fancies he hears something like a wheezing in his throat; and discovering quite unexpectedly that the gate would open, wisely avoids a fall, which was *booked* had he attempted to leap it. He pulls up, then, at the gate; and as he places the hook of his whip under the latch, John White goes over it close to the hinge-post, and Captain Ross, upon Clinker, follows him. The Reviewer then walks through.

'The scene now shifts. On the other side of the lane is a fence of this description: it is a newly plashed hedge, abounding in strong growers, as they are called, and a yawning ditch on the further side; but, as is peculiar to Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, a considerable portion of the blackthorn, left uncut, leans outwards from the hedge, somewhat about breast-high. This large fence is taken by all now with the hounds—some to the right and some to the left of the direct line; but the little bay horse would have no more of it. Snob puts him twice at it, and manfully too; but the wind is out of him, and he has no power to rise. Several scrambles, but only one fall, occur at this rasper, all having enough of the killing

pace; and a mile and a half further, the second horses are fallen in with, just in the nick of time. A short check from the stain of sheep makes everything comfortable; and, the Squire having hit off his fox like a workman, thirteen men, out of two hundred, are fresh mounted, and with the hounds, which settle to the scent again at a truly killing pace.

'"Hold hard, Holyoake!" exclaims Mr. Osbaldeston (now mounted on Clasher), knowing what double-quick time he would be marching to, with fresh pipes to play upon, and the crowd well shaken off; "*pray* don't press 'em too hard, and we shall be sure to kill our fox.[1] *Have at him there*, Abigail and Fickle, good bitches—see what a head they are carrying! I'll bet a thousand they kill him." The country appears better and better. "He's taking a capital line," exclaims Sir Harry Goodricke, as he points out to Sir James Musgrave two young Furrier hounds, who are particularly distinguishing themselves at the moment. "Worth a dozen Reform Bills," shouts Sir Francis Burdett,[2] sitting erect upon Sampson,[3] and putting his head straight at a yawner. "We shall have the Whissendine brook," cries Mr. Maher, who knows every field in the country, "for he is making straight for Teigh." "And a bumper too, after last night's rain," holloas Captain Berkeley, determined to get first to four stiff rails in a corner. "So much the better," says Lord Alvanley, "I like a bumper at all times." "A fig for the Whissendine," cries Lord Gardner; "I am on the best water-jumper in my stable."

'The prophecy turns up. Having skirted Ranksborough gorse, the villain has nowhere to stop short of Woodwell-head

[1] One peculiar excellence in Mr. Osbaldeston's hounds was their steadiness under pressure by the crowd (Author's note).

[2] Sir Francis Burdett, M.P. for Westminster 1807-1837, was prominent among the organisers of the 'Hampden Clubs,' founded in 1816 and after, for parliamentary reform. He was twice imprisoned on political charges, in 1810 and 1820.

[3] A favourite hunter of the baronet's, which he once honoured by coming all the way from London to Melton to ride *one* day with hounds (Author's note).

cover, which he is pointing for; and in ten minutes, or less, the brook appears in view. It is even with its banks, and as

"Smooth glides the water where the brook is deep,"

its deepness was pretty certain to be fathomed. "Yooi, OVER he goes!" holloas the Squire, as he perceives Joker and Jewell plunging into the stream, and Red-rose shaking herself on the opposite bank. Seven men, out of thirteen, take it in their stride; three stop short, their horses refusing the first time, but come well over the second; and three find themselves in the middle of it. The gallant Frank Forester is among the latter; and having been requested that morning to wear a friend's new red coat, to take off the gloss and glare of the shop, he accomplishes the task to perfection in the bluish-black mud of the Whissendine, only then subsiding after a three days' flood. "Who is that under his horse in the brook?" inquires that good sportsman and fine rider, Mr. Green of Rolleston, whose noted old mare had just skimmed over the water like a swallow on a summer's evening. "It 's Middleton Biddulph," says one. "Pardon me," cries Mr. Middleton Biddulph; "Middleton Biddulph is here, *and here he means to be!*" "Only Dick Christian," answers Lord Forester, "and it is nothing new to him."[1] "But he 'll be drowned," exclaims Lord Kinnaird. "I shouldn't wonder," observes Mr. William Coke. But the pace is *too good* to inquire.

The fox does his best to escape: he threads hedgerows, tries the out-buildings of a farm-house, and once turns so short as nearly to run his foil; but—the perfection of the thing—the hounds turn shorter than he does, as much as to say—*die you shall.* The pace has been awful for the last twenty minutes. Three horses are blown to a stand-still, and few are going at their ease. "Out upon this great carcase of mine! no horse that was ever foaled can live under it at this pace, and over this country," says one of the best of the welter-weights, as

[1] 'Talk of tumbles! I have had eleven in one day down there [Melton] when I was above seventy.'—*Dick Christian's Lectures,* see *Post and Paddock* by 'The Druid.

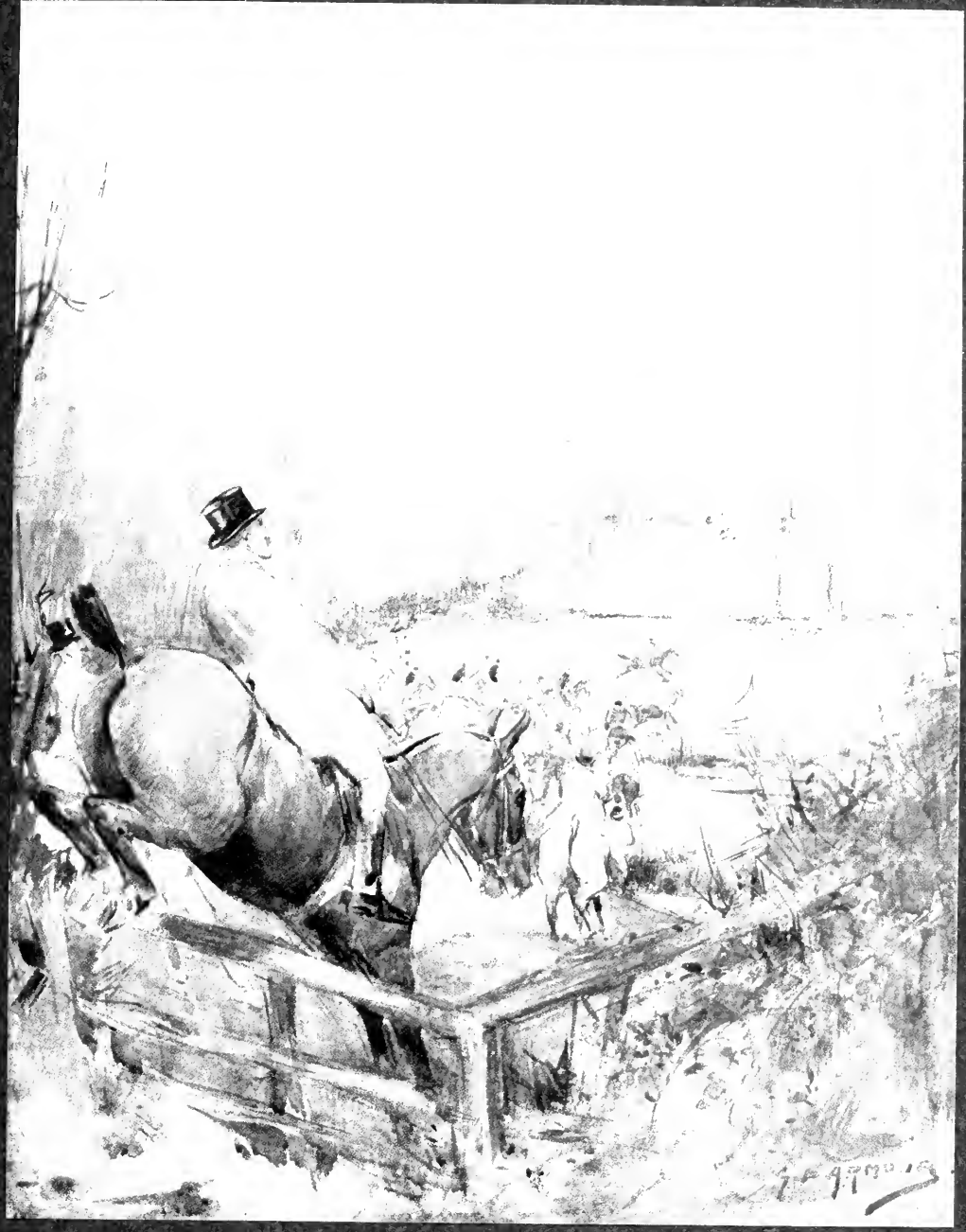
he stands over his four-hundred-guinea chestnut, then rising from the ground after giving him a heavy fall—his tail nearly erect in the air, his nostrils violently distended, and his eye almost fixed. "Not hurt, I hope," exclaimed Mr. Maxse, to *somebody* whom he gets a glimpse of through the openings of a tall quickset hedge which is between them, coming neck and croup into the adjoining field, from the top bar of a high, hog-backed stile. His eye might have been spared the unpleasing sight, had not his ear been attracted to a sort of *procumbit-humi-bos* sound of a horse falling to the ground on his back, the bone of his left hip indenting the greensward within two inches of his rider's thigh. It is young Peyton, who, having missed his second horse at the check, had been going nearly half the way in distress; but from nerve and pluck, perhaps peculiar to Englishmen in the hunting field, but very peculiar to himself, got within three fields of the end of this brilliant run. The fall was all but a certainty; for it was the third stiff timber-fence that had unfortunately opposed him, after his horse's wind had been pumped out by the pace; but he was too good to refuse them, and his horse knew better than to do so.

The *Æneid* of Virgil ends with a death, and a chase is not complete without it. The fox dies within half a mile of Woodwell-head cover, evidently his point from the first; the pack pulling him down in the middle of a large grass field, every hound but one at his brush.'

Such was fox-hunting in Leicestershire in the days of William the Fourth. Multiply the number of the field by three or four, stir in references to railways, ladies, and perhaps to an overlooked strand of wire, and the story might stand as of to-day.

Wire began to come into use in the late 'fifties: in 1862 the Atherstone country was dangerously wired: in 1863-1864 Mr. Tailby's was so much wired that special endeavours were successfully made to remove it. Barbed wire was first used in England in 1882.

Fox-hunting :
The Vale



Here are, epitomised, some of the great runs of the last eighty years :—

17*th March* 1837.—Mr. Delmé Radcliffe's Wendover Run. Found at Kensworth at half-past two, ran their fox to Hampden and lost him at dusk : 2 hours 35 minutes : 18½ miles point to point, 26 as hounds ran. Fox found dead in a rick-yard next morning.

9*th February* 1849.—The Old Findon (Surrey). Ran their fox 45 miles in 4 hours 50 minutes : last 22 miles nearly straight : killed in Dorking Glory, Surrey.

2*nd February* 1866.—The Pytchley, Waterloo Run. Found in Waterloo Gorse at five minutes past two, ran to Blatston : 3 hours 45 minutes : whipped off in the dark at 5.30. 13 couples of hounds up of 17½ out.[1]

3*rd February* 1868.—The Meynell, Radburne Run. Found in the Rough : fast but erratic run to near Biggin, 3 hours 37 minutes : 36 miles : fox believed to have been knocked over when dead beat by a farmer.

22*nd February* 1871.—Duke of Beaufort's Greatwood Run. Found Gretenham Great Wood : marked to ground on Swindon side of Highworth : 14 miles point to point : 28 miles as hounds ran. 3 hours 30 minutes.

16*th February* 1872.—Mr. Chaworth Musters's Harlequin Run. Found in the Harlequin Gorse, Ratcliffe-on-Trent : ran very straight to Hoton Spinney and back to beyond Kinmoulton Woods. Killed. Over 35 miles : 3 hours 26 minutes. 15½ couples of hounds up of 17½ out.

9*th February* 1881.—Mr. Rolleston's Lowdham Run. Found in Halloughton Wood : ran 16 miles to Eakring Brales : 12 mile point, gave up at dusk : very fast all the way, but time not recorded. Dead fox found in Eakring Brales two days after.

1*st December* 1888.—The Grafton, Brafield Run. Found

[1] Mr. Robert Fellowes, who rode in this run, thinks it much overrated : 'hounds were continually changing foxes and were never near catching one of them. It was only a journey.'

in Brafield Furze on Mr. Christopher Smythe's property: ran perfectly straight for 8 miles: turned left-handed and killed after another 50 minutes' fast hunting. Every hound up.

14*th December* 1894.—The Quorn, Barkby Holt Run. Found in Barkby Holt: 27 miles in 2 hours 5 minutes to ground in Bolt Wood. Grass all the way: very fast: horses stopping in every field.

2*nd January* 1899.—The Craven Sydmonton Run. Found in Sydmonton Big Wood. Hounds stopped at Tubbs Copse near Bramley Station. 10 miles point to point: 20 miles as hounds ran. First ten miles so fast nobody could get near hounds.

27*th March* 1903.—The Quorn Barkby Holt Run. 12 miles to just short of Oakham Pastures. Killed.

It is the exception rather than the rule for one of these long runs to end with a kill. The fact that six out of the eleven occurred in February will be remarked.

These are some of the strange places wherein foxes have been killed or left:—On the housekeeper's bed upstairs, Catas Farm, near Heather, Leicestershire: late in October or early November 1864 (clubbed while asleep by a waggoner). Kitchen of a builder at Wetherby, Bramham Moor killed 31st May 1875. In Mr. Fernie's country: took refuge beside a ploughman and his team, November 1899. Killed in Broughton Astley Church, near Leicester, while congregation assembling, Friday, 12th August 1900. Down farmhouse chimney from the roof: fire raked out, and left by Essex and Suffolk, 26th December 1903. Mineral water factory: employés usurped function of hounds and lost: Atherstone, March 1904.

The height from which a fox can drop without hurting himself is very extraordinary. Foxes often seek refuge in trees,[1] and if disturbed drop to ground without hesitation.

[1] This trait seems to be of modern development. I have found no mention of tree-climbing foxes in the records of a century back.

The greatest drop of which I have record occurred on the 19th February 1886 in the Blackmore Vale country. The second whipper-in ascended the slightly slanting elm up which the fox, helped by ivy, had climbed. The fox eventually went nearly to the top, and as it was thought he must fall and be killed when he tried to get down, he was dislodged. He dropped a distance of forty-four feet, falling on his nose and chest, but stood up before hounds for two miles before they killed him.

A season never passes without half a dozen foxes seeking shelter in dwellings—rather a pathetic tribute to humanity; but the most resolute seeker after such sanctuary is that recorded of a fox hunted by the Border on 4th February 1904. First he tried, and failed, to take refuge in a smithy wash-house at Yetholm : then crossed the village and hid in the room of a house undergoing repairs : driven out, he entered yet another house by the kitchen window and went upstairs to a bedroom : dislodged again, he was run into and killed in a neighbouring garden. There is record of a fox seeking a hiding-place in the cleaned carcase of a recently killed sheep, but I cannot find particulars.

The strangest place in which to lay up her litter was chosen by a Heythrop vixen in July 1874. There is at Oddington an old disused church : the vixen established her nursery in the pulpit.

When we consider how closely the country is hunted, it is not wonderful that packs should occasionally clash. On 3rd April 1877 Lord Galway's, on their way to draw Maltby Wood, after a morning run, hit off the line of a fox : he showed signs of being beaten, and they killed him after a comparatively short burst. While breaking him up Lord Fitzwilliam's hounds came up : Lord Galway's had ' cut in ' and killed the fox they were hunting.

The average weight of the fox is put at from 11 to 14 lbs. : of a vixen, 9 to 12 lbs. All the heaviest foxes recorded have been fell foxes : the biggest actually weighed was killed by

the Ullswater on Cross Fell Range: 23 lbs., four feet four inches from tip to tip: date not given. In March 1874 Mr. F. Chapman weighed alive a bagman turned out at Palmer Flat, Aysgarth, Yorkshire, 21 lbs. On 13th December 1877 the Melbrake killed two foxes, $20\frac{1}{4}$ and $18\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. On 4th January 1878 the Sinnington killed a $19\frac{1}{2}$-lb. fox. The fox that was too heavy for a 20-lb. scale, but was estimated to weigh 26 lbs., must be regretfully omitted from the list.

As I write comes one having pretty talent for conundrums, to ask when the practice of rounding the ears of hounds came into use. The question is difficult to answer. The few hound pictures of Francis Barlow (b. 1626, dec. 1702) show no rounded ears: the many pictures of John Wootton (b. *circa* 1685, dec. 1765) show ears rounded, but in less degree than at a later date, but also ears in the natural state. In his 'Death of the Fox' some of the hounds are rounded and some are not: in his 'Portraits of Hounds' three are rounded and one is not. Unfortunately none of these works are dated. Stephen Elmer's portrait of Mr. Corbet's Trojan, entered 1780, shows the ears closely rounded. In the engravings from Wootton's works some hounds' ears seem to be cut to a point; 'peaked' would describe the shape; but I have never seen any reference in early hunting books to this or any other method of cutting the ears. Peaking would answer much the same purpose as rounding, an operation now not universally practised.

Is there anything in the literature of the chase more delightful than this from Charles Kingsley's 'My Winter Garden'? [1]

'. . . Stay. There was a sound at last; a light footfall. A hare races towards us, through the ferns, her great bright eyes full of terror, her ears aloft to catch some sound behind. She sees us, turns short, and vanishes into the gloom. The mare pricks up her ears too, listens, and looks: but not the way the hare has gone. There is something more coming; I can trust the finer sense of the horse, to which (and no wonder)

[1] *Fraser's Magazine*, April 1858.

the Middle Ages attributed the power of seeing ghosts and fairies impalpable to man's gross eyes. Beside, that hare was not travelling in search of food. She was not " loping " along, looking around her right and left, but galloping steadily. She has been frightened, she has been put up: but what has put her up? And there, far away among the fir-stems, rings the shriek of a startled blackbird. What has put him up? That, old mare, at sight whereof your wise eyes widen until they are ready to burst, and your ears are first shot forward toward your nose, and then laid back with vicious intent. Stand still, old woman! Do you think still, after fifteen winters, that you can catch a fox? A fox, it is indeed; a great dog-fox, as red as the fir-stems between which he glides. And yet his legs are black with fresh peat stains. He is a hunted fox: but he has not been up long. The mare stands like a statue: but I can feel her trembling between my knees. Positively he does not see us. He sits down in the middle of a ride, turns his great ears right and left, and then scratches one of them with his hind foot, seemingly to make it hear the better. Now he is off again and on.

'Beneath yon firs, some hundred yards away, standeth, or rather lieth, for it is on dead flat ground, the famous castle of Malepartus, which beheld the base murder of Lampe, the hare, and many a seely soul beside. I know it well: a patch of sand heaps, mingled with great holes, amid the twining fir roots; ancient home of the last of the wild beasts.

'And thither, unto Malepartus safe and strong, trots Reinecke, where he hopes to be snug among the labyrinthine windings, and innumerable starting-holes, as the old apologue has it, of his ballium, covert-way and donjon keep.

'Full blown in self-satisfaction he trots, lifting his toes delicately, and carrying his brush aloft, as full of cunning and conceit as that world-famous ancestor of his, whose deeds of unchivalry were the delight, if not the model, of knight and kaiser, lady and burgher, in the Middle Age.

'Suddenly he halts at the great gate of Malepartus;

examines it with his nose, goes on to a postern; examines that also, and then another and another; while I perceive afar, projecting from every cave's mouth, the red and green end of a new fir-faggot. Ah Reinecke! fallen is thy conceit, and fallen thy tail therewith. Thou hast worse foes to deal with than Bruin the bear, or Isegrim the wolf, or any foolish brute whom thy great ancestor outwitted. Man, the many-counselled, has been beforehand with thee; and the earths are stopped.

'One moment he sits down to meditate, and scratches those trusty counsellors, his ears, as if he would tear them off, "revolving swift thoughts in a crafty mind." He has settled it now. He is up and off—and at what a pace! Out of the way, Fauns and Hamadryads, if any be left in the forest. What a pace! And with what a grace beside!

'Oh Reinecke, beautiful thou art, of a surety, in spite of thy great naughtiness. Art thou some fallen spirit, doomed to be hunted for thy sins in this life, and in some future life rewarded for thy swiftness, and grace, and cunning by being made a very messenger of the immortals? Who knows? Not I. I am rising fast to Pistol's vein. Shall I ejaculate? Shall I notify? Shall I waken the echoes? Shall I break the grand silence by that scream which the vulgar view-halloo call? It is needless; for louder and louder every moment swells up a sound which makes my heart leap into my mouth, and my mare into the air. . . .

'Music? Well-beloved soul of Hullah, would that thou wert here this day, and not in St. Martin's Hall, to hear that chorus, as it pours round the fir-stems, rings against the roof above, shatters up into a hundred echoes, till the air is live with sound! You love Madrigals, or whatever Weelkes, or Wilbye, or Orlando Gibbons sang of old. So do I. Theirs is music fit for men: worthy of the age of heroes, of Drake and Raleigh, Spenser and Shakspeare; but oh, that you could hear this madrigal! If you must have "four parts," then there they are. Deep-mouthed bass, rolling along the ground;

rich joyful tenor: wild wistful alto; and leaping up here and there above the throng of sounds, delicate treble shrieks and trills of trembling joy. I know not whether you can fit it into your laws of music, any more than you can the song of that Ariel sprite who dwells in the Eolian harp, or the roar of the waves on the rock, or

> "Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn,
> And murmur of innumerable bees."

But music it is. A madrigal? Rather a whole opera of *Der Freischütz*—dæmonic element and all—to judge by those red lips, fierce eyes, wild hungry voices; and such as should make Reinecke, had he strong æsthetic sympathies, well content to be hunted from his cradle to his grave, that such sweet sounds might by him enrich the air. Heroes of old were glad to die if but some "vates sacer" would sing their fame in worthy strains: and shalt not thou too be glad, Reinecke? Content thyself with thy fate. Music soothes care; let it soothe thine, as thou runnest for thy life; thou shalt have enough of it in the next hour. For as the Etruscans (says Athenæus) were so luxurious that they used to flog their slaves to the sound of the flute, so shall luxurious Chanter and Challenger, Sweet-lips and Melody, eat thee to the sound of rich organ-pipes, that so thou mayest,

> "Like that old fabled swan, in music die."

'And now appear, dim at first and distant, but brightening and nearing fast, many a right good fellow and many a right good horse. I know three out of four of them, their private histories, the private histories of their horses; and could tell you many a good story of them: but shall not, being an English gentleman, and not an American *littérateur*. They are not very clever, or very learned, or very anything, except gallant men: but they are good enough company for me, or any one; and each has his own *spécialité*, for which I like him. That huntsman I have known for fifteen years, and sat many

an hour beside his father's deathbed. I am godfather to that whip's child. I have seen the servants of the hunt, as I have seen the hounds, grow up round me for two generations, and I look on them as old friends, and like to look into their brave, honest, weather-beaten faces. That red coat there, I knew him when he was a school-boy; and now he is a captain in the Guards, and won his Victoria Cross at Inkerman: that bright green coat is the best farmer, as well as the hardest rider, for many a mile round; one who plays, as he works, with all his might, and might have made a *beau sabreur* and colonel of dragoons. So might that black coat, who now brews good beer, and stands up for the poor at the Board of Guardians, and rides, like the green coat, as well as he works. That other black coat is a county banker: but he knows more of the fox than the fox knows of himself, and where the hounds are, there will he be this day. That red coat has hunted kangaroo in Australia; that one has—but what matter to you who each man is? Enough that each can tell me a good story, welcome me cheerfully, and give me out here, in the wild forest, the wholesome feeling of being at home among friends.

'And am I going with them?

'Certainly. He who falls in with hounds running, and follows them not as far as he can (business permitting, of course, in a business country) is either more or less than man. So I who am neither more nor less, but simply a man like my neighbours, turn my horse's head to go.

'There is music again, if you will listen, in the soft tread of those hundred horse-hoofs upon the spungy vegetable soil. They are trotting now in "common time." You may hear the whole Croats' March (the finest trotting march in the world) played by those iron heels; the time, as it does in the Croats' March, breaking now and then, plunging, jingling, struggling through heavy ground, bursting for a moment into a jubilant canter, as it reaches a sound spot. . . .

'But that time does not last long. The hounds feather a moment round Malepartus, puzzled by the windings of Rei-

Fox-hunting:
Jumping the Brook

necke's footsteps. Look at Virginal, five yards ahead of the rest, as her stern flourishes, and her pace quickens. Hark to Virginal! as after one whimper, she bursts out full-mouthed, and the rest dash up and away in chorus, madder than ever, and we after them up the ride. Listen to the hoof-tune now. The common time is changed to triple; and the heavy steady thud—thud—thud—tells one even blindfold that we are going. . . .

'Going, and "going to go." For a mile of ride have I galloped tangled among men and horses, and cheered by occasional glimpses of the white-spotted backs in front; and every minute the pace quickens. Now the hounds swing off the ride, and through the fir trees; and now it shall be seen who can ride the winter-garden.

'I make no comparisons. I feel due respect for "the counties." I have tasted of old, though sparingly, the joys of grass; but this I do say, as said the gentlemen of the New Forest fifty years ago, in the days of its glory, when the forest and the court were one, that a man may be able to ride in Leicestershire, and yet not able to ride in the forest. It is one thing to race over grass, light or heavy, seeing a mile ahead of you, and coming up to a fence which, however huge, is honest, and another to ride where we are going now.

'If you will pay money enough for your horses; if you will keep them in racing condition; and having done so simply stick on (being of course a valiant man and true), then you can ride grass, and

"Drink delight of battle with your peers,"

or those of the realm in Leicestershire, Rutland, or Northampton. But here more is wanted, and yet not so much. Not so much, because the pace is seldom as great; but more, because you are in continual petty danger, requiring continued thought, promptitude, experience. There it is the best horse who wins; but here it is the shrewdest man. Therefore, let him who is fearful and faint-hearted keep to the rides; and

not only he but he who has a hot horse; he who has no hand; he who has no heel, or a horse who knows not what heel means; for this riding is more like Australian bush-coursing, or Bombay hog-hunting, than the pursuit of the wily animal over a civilized country, as it appears in Leech's inimitable caricatures.

'Therefore, of the thirty horsemen, some twenty wisely keep the ride, and no shame to them. They can go well elsewhere; they will go well (certainly they will leave me behind) when we reach the enclosures three miles off: but here they are wise in staying on *terra firma.*

'But there are those who face *terram infirmam.* Off turns our Master, riding, as usual, as if he did not know he was riding, and thereby showing how well he rides.

'Off turns the huntsman; the brave green coat on the mouse mare; the brave black coat on the black mare. Mark those two last, if you do not know the country, for where the hounds are there will they be to the last. Off turns a tall Irish baronet; the red coat who has ridden in Australia; an old gentleman who has just informed me that he was born close to Billesden-Coplow, and looks as if he could ride anywhere, even to the volcanoes of the moon, which must be a rough country, to look at it through a telescope. Off turns a gallant young Borderer, who has seen bogs and wolds ere now, but at present grows mustachios in a militia regiment at Aldershot: a noble youth to look at. May he prosper this day and all days, and beget brave children to hunt with Lord Elcho when he is dead and gone. And off turn poor humble I, on the old screwed mare. I know I shall be left behind, ridden past, possibly ridden over, laughed to scorn by swells on hundred-and-fifty-guinea horses; but I know the winter-garden, and I want a gallop. Half an hour will do for me; but it must be a half hour of mad, thoughtless, animal life, and then if I can go no further, I will walk the mare home contentedly, and do my duty in that state of life to which Providence has been pleased to call me. . . .

'. . . Racing indeed; for as Reinecke gallops up the

narrow heather-fringed pathway, he brushes off his scent upon the twigs at every stride, and the hounds race after him, showing no head indeed, and keeping, for convenience, in one long line upon the track, but going, head up, sterns down, at a pace which no horse can follow.—I only hope they may not overrun the scent.

'They have overrun it; halt, and put their heads down a moment. But with one swift cast in full gallop they have hit it off again, fifty yards away in the heather, long ere we are up to them; for those hounds can hunt a fox because they are not hunted themselves, and so have learnt to trust themselves; as boys should learn at school, even at the risk of a mistake or two. Now they are showing head indeed, down a half cleared valley, and over a few ineffectual turnips, withering in the peat, a patch of growing civilization in the heart of the wilderness; and then over the brook—woe 's me! and we must follow—if we can.

'Down we come to it, over a broad sheet of burnt ground, where a week ago the young firs were blazing, crackling, spitting turpentine for a mile on end. Now it lies all black and ghastly, with hard charred stumps, like ugly teeth, or caltrops of old, set to lame charging knights.

'Over a stiff furze-grown bank, which one has to jump on and off—if one can; and over the turnip patch, breathless.

'Now we are at the brook, dyke, lode, drain, or whatever you call it. Much as I value agricultural improvements, I wish its making had been postponed for at least this one year.

'Shall we race at it, as at Rosy or Wissendine, and so over in one long stride? Would that we could! But racing at it is impossible; for we stagger up to it almost knee-deep of newly-cut yellow clay, with a foul runnel at the bottom. The brave green coat finds a practicable place, our Master another; and both jump, not over, but in; and then out again, not by a leap, but by clawings as of a gigantic cat. The second whip goes in before me, and somehow vanishes headlong. I see the water shoot up from under his shoulders full

ten feet high, and his horse sitting disconsolate on his tail at the bottom, like a great dog. However they are up again and out, painted of a fair raw-ochre hue; and I have to follow in fear and trembling, expecting to be painted in like wise.

'Well, I am in and out again, I don't know how: but this I know, that I am in a great bog. Natural bogs, red, brown or green, I know from childhood, and never was taken in by one in my life; but this has taken me in, in all senses. Why do people pare and trim bogs before draining them?—thus destroying the light coat of tenacious stuff on the top, which Nature put there on purpose to help poor horsemen over, and the blanket of red bog-moss, which is meant as a fair warning to all who know the winter-garden.

'However I am no worse off than my neighbours. Here we are, ten valiant men, all bogged together; and who knows how deep the peat may be?

'I jump off and lead, considering that a horse plus a man weighs more than a horse alone; so do one or two more. The rest plunge bravely on, whether because of their hurry, or like Child Waters in the ballad, "for fyling of their feet."

'However "all things do end," as Carlyle pithily remarks somewhere in his *French Revolution*; and so does this bog. I wish this gallop would end too. How long have we been going? There is no time to take out a watch; but I fancy the mare flags: I am sure my back aches with standing in my stirrups. I become desponding. I am sure I shall never see this fox killed; sure I shall not keep up five minutes longer; sure I shall have a fall soon; sure I shall ruin the mare's fetlocks in the ruts. I am bored. I wish it was all over, and I safe at home in bed. Then why do I not stop? I cannot tell. That thud, thud, thud, through moss and mire has become an element of my being, a temporary necessity, and go I must. I do not ride the mare; the Wild Huntsman, invisible to me, rides her; and I, like Bürger's *Lenore*, am carried on in spite of myself, "tramp, tramp, along the land, splash, splash, along the sea."

'By which I do not at all mean that the mare has run away with me. On the contrary, I am afraid that I have been shaking her up during the last five minutes more than once. But the spirit of Odin, "the mover," "the goer" (for that is his etymology) whom German sages connect much with the Wild Huntsman, has got hold of my midriff and marrow, and go I must, for "The Goer" has taken me. . . .

'. . . The hounds, moreover, have obligingly waited for us two fields on. For the cold wet pastures we are entering do not carry the scent as the heather did, in which Reinecke, as he galloped, brushed off his perspiration against every twig: and the hounds are now flemishing up and down by the side of the brown, alder-fringed brook which parts the counties. I can hear the flap and snort of the dogs' nostrils as they canter round me; and I like it. It is exciting; but why—who can tell?

'What beautiful creatures they are too! Next to a Greek statue (I mean a real old Greek one; for I am a thoroughly anti-preraphaelite benighted pagan heathen in taste, and intend some day to get up a Cinque-Cento Club, for the total abolition of Gothic art)—next to a Greek statue, I say, I know few such combinations of grace and strength, as in a fine fox-hound. It is the beauty of the Theseus—light and yet massive; and light not in spite of its masses, but on account of the perfect disposition of them. I do not care for grace in man, woman, or animal, which is obtained (as in the old German painters) at the expense of honest flesh and blood. . . .'

WITH HORSE AND HOUND

ODE TO THE NORTH-EAST WIND

Welcome, wild North-easter!
Shame it is to see
Odes to every zephyr;
Ne'er a verse to thee.
Welcome, black North-easter!
O'er the German foam;
O'er the Danish moorlands,
From thy frozen home.
Tired we are of summer,
Tired of gaudy glare,
Showers soft and steaming,
Hot and breathless air.
Tired of listless dreaming,
Through the lazy day:
Jovial wind of winter
Turns us out to play!
Sweep the golden reed-beds;
Crisp the lazy dyke;
Hunger into madness
Every plunging pike.
Fill the lake with wild-fowl;
Fill the marsh with snipe;
While on dreary moorlands
Lonely curlews pipe.
Though the black fir-forest
Thunder harsh and dry,
Shattering down the snow-flakes
Off the curdled sky.
Hark! the brave North-easter!
Breast-high lies the scent,
On by holt and headland,
Over heath and bent.
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
Through the sleet and snow.
Who can over-ride you?
Let the horses go!
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
Down the roaring blast;
You shall see a fox die
Ere an hour be past.
Go! and rest to-morrow,
Hunting in your dreams,
While our skates are ringing
O'er the frozen streams.
Let the luscious South-wind
Breathe in lovers' sighs,
While the lazy gallants
Bask in ladies' eyes.
What does he but soften
Heart alike and pen?
'Tis the hard grey weather
Breeds hard English men.
What's the soft South-wester?
'Tis the ladies' breeze,
Bringing home their true-loves
Out of all the seas:
But the black North-easter,
Through the snowstorm hurled,
Drives our English hearts of oak
Seaward round the world.
Come, as came our fathers,
Heralded by thee,
Conquering from the eastward,
Lords by land and sea.
Come, and strong within us
Stir the Vikings' blood;
Bracing brain and sinew;
Blow, thou wind of God!

CHARLES KINGSLEY, 1854.

STAG-HUNTING

TURBERVILE'S description of the approved methods of harbouring, rousing and hunting a stag in the sixteenth century would in the main apply as well to those in vogue on Exmoor, in the New Forest and Lancashire at the present time, as they would to the sport in the days of the Normans, when chase, by the unprivileged, of the ' King's Great Game ' was an offence punishable by death or mutilation. The most noteworthy change has been in the hounds. When Mr. Lucas, Master of the hunt since known as the Devon and Somerset,[1] in 1825 sold his pack to go to France, the last of the old breed of staghounds left England. ' For courage, strength, speed and tongue, they were unrivalled : few horses could live with them in the open. Their rarest quality perhaps was their sagacity in hunting in the water. Every pebble, every overhanging bush or twig which the deer might have touched was quested . . . and the *crash* with which the scent, if detected, was acknowledged and announced made the whole country echo again.' Daniel says ' the Staghound is large and gallops with none of the neatness of the Foxhound ' : it would seem also to have been more temperate, as he observes that its only excellence (!) ' is the being more readily brought to stop when headed by the Huntsman or his assistants, altho' in the midst of his keenest pursuit.'

There is no better picture of stag-hunting on Exmoor than that of Dr. C. P. Collyns :—

' . . . But we must move onward ; below us we gaze on the lovely vale of Porlock, a strip of richly cultivated land, beyond which the plantations of Selworthy rise green and high, hiding the cliffs against which the angry waters of the

[1] The name was not adopted until 1837.

Bristol Channel chafe and surge in vain. There, in the valley, you may see the garden and grounds of Holnicote, Sir Thomas Acland's lovely summer abode.[1] Below us lie Cloutsham farm, and the famed coverts of Horner. We descend the steep, cross the stream, and ascend again until we reach the knoll on which the farm-house stands. . . . But there is no time to be lost. The covert is large and deep, and the chances are that much time must elapse ere we see the tufters fairly settled on their stag, and the monarch of the woods driven from his stronghold.

'The harbourer approaches; and around him is held a council. He is certain that the same stag that we found in the covert a week ago has again made that favourite haunt his resting-place. He fed in the turnips beyond the oak copse this morning, and, though there are many hinds and calves in the wood, by care and perseverance we are assured that he will be found and got away. The order is given to draft out the tufters, and Sam proceeds to perform the duty. Let us follow him. The hounds are shut up in a large barn, and we hear them baying, as if to chide the delay which takes place while preliminaries are being settled. Cautiously Sam opens the door. A rush of hounds is checked by the old fellow's voice and whip. "Get back, my darlin's!" says Sam, as he checks the impetuous advance of the eager babblers, and singles out the staid and steady veterans, to whom the business of "tufting" is to be confided. Far back in the dim recesses of the hovel sits old "Shiner," looking as if he were ashamed to appear concerned, yet shuddering all over with excitement. "Shiner," says Sam; "Shiner, old man," and the noble hound springs from his place, clears the youngsters, and in a moment is rolling on the greensward, and giving utterance to his joy in notes loud, deep, and prolonged. "Constant! Constant!" cries Sam, and the wary old bitch slips round the door-post as if by magic, and whence

[1] Holnicote, Sir T. D. Acland's residence, was destroyed by fire in August 1851. It is now (1862) in the course of rebuilding.

Stag-hunting :
Stag on Hill

nobody can tell. "*Rewin! Rewin!*" cries the huntsman; and, after a few coy wriggles and yells, pretty "Ruin" is emancipated, and displays her joy by knocking down a small boy, and defacing a spotless pair of leathers, the property of a gentleman who is very particular about his costume. "Trojan" next responds to the summons, and the tale of the tufters is complete. Sam shuts the door, leaves the pack under the care of the whip, mounts his hack, tries the effect of his voice to silence the hounds he leaves behind him, which, to testify their disappointment, lift up their voices and lament, but in vain; and off we go to the edge of the covert, where, under a friendly oak-tree, we take up our position, while Sam and the harbourer proceed to their duties. . . .

'Hark, "Constant" speaks! "Ruin" confirms it. The tufters open all together, and every eye strains to catch a view of the game. Here they come: not what we want, but it 's a pretty sight. A yeld hind in advance, a second hind which knoweth the cares of maternity, her calf beside her, canter up towards the tree where we stand—stop, sniff, and trot away, as if they thought we were dangerous and to be avoided. "Shiner" is close upon them, the rest of the tufters following him. A little rating and a few cracks of the whip, and their heads are up; they know that they are not on the "real animal," and as soon as Sam's horn summons them, back they go, and resume their labours. Again they open, and again we are on the alert. The cry increases—they run merrily, and we are high in hope.

'"Ware fox!" says an M.F.H., the best sportsman in the West, as he views Charley slinking along towards the gap in the hedgerow. Then with his stentorian voice he calls out to Sam, "Your hounds are on a fox, Sam." Sam does not hear, but rides up within a hundred yards of us. "What, Sir?" "Your hounds are on a fox, Sam," repeats the M.F.H. "Think not, Sir,' says Sam. "*My* hounds won't hunt fox!" "I tell you they are on a fox, Sam—call them off," says the fox-hunter. Sam looks vicious, but he obeys,

saying in a voice which *could* be heard by the Master of Fox-hounds, but certainly not by the tufters, " Get away hounds, get away ; *ain't you ashamed of hunting of a stinking little warmint, not half the size of yourselves ?* Get away ! " Sam still maintains his creed that *his* tufters were not on the fox, and two minutes afterwards a yell announced that a different sort of animal was afoot. Another tally : Tom W——'s voice, a guarantee that it is the right thing—for a good yeoman is the best and truest stag-hunter that ever cheered a hound. Every one is on the alert ; we ride forward, and presently, in the distance, view, not a stag, alas ! but a hind breaking towards the moor. " How is this, Tom ? You were wrong for once." " No, Sir, not I ; I 'll swear it was a stag, and a good one—but you see he has pushed up the hind and gone down, and we must have him up again." So the tufters are stopped again, and sent back on heel, and by and by that unmistakable " yell " which announces a view is heard, and this time the antlered monarch reveals himself to the whole of the assembled multitude. It is but for a moment ; again he seeks the depths of the covert, but the tufters rattle him along, and are so close that he has no time for playing tricks, and beyond all doubt must now face the open. We ride towards the spot where in all probability he will break, and as the voice of the hounds comes nearer and yet more near, you may almost hear the pulses of the throng of spectators standing by the gate of that large oat-stubble beat with excitement.

' Hark ! a rustle in the wood, then a pause. Then a rush, and then—in his full glory and majesty, on the bank separating the wood from the field, stands the noble animal ! Look at him—mark his full, thoughtful eye—his noble bearing. Look at his beamed frontlet—how he bears it—not a trace of fear about his gestures—all dignified and noble, yet how full of thought and sagacity. He pauses for a minute, perfectly regardless of the hundreds at the gate who gaze upon him.

' You need not fear that he will be " blanched," that is headed, by the formidable array drawn up to inspect him.

He has too well considered his course of action to be deterred from making good his point. Quietly and attentively he listens to the tufters, as with unerring instinct they approach—" the cry is still they come." His noble head moves more quickly from side to side—the moment for action has arrived—the covert is no longer safe. He must seek safety in flight, and look to securer shades wherein to rest. So he gathers himself together to run his course.

' There ! you have seen a wild stag break covert, and stretch away over the open. Did you ever see a finer sight—did you mark well the beauty of his action as he bounded from the fence of the wood ? Did you not view with admiration his stately form as he gazed on the hunters drawn up at the gate—the momentary pause, ere he stalked a few strides, as if to show that he feared us not ? Was not the bounding trot into which he then broke the very " poetry of motion " ? And when at length he exchanged it for a long, easy, steady gallop, did you ever witness movement more elastic and graceful ?

' Now, my friends, draw your girths, lend your aid to stop the tufters, and make up your minds for a run. If you see that stag again this side of Brendon Barton (unless by chance we fall in with him, and he is " set up," brought to bay, that is, in Badgworthy Water) I am very much mistaken. The tufters are stopped, not without some difficulty. Sam and his coadjutors emerge from the covert, the pack leave their barn, and are taken carefully up to a spot where it is convenient to lay on. A shepherd who has viewed the deer on the open moor lifts his hat on a stick. We go to the signal—the hounds press forward and are unrestrained—they dash—fling their sterns—a whimper—a crash—they are off, and a hundred horsemen follow as best they may across the wild open waste.

' The pace is tremendous—the ground uneven and often deep—already a tail, and many a gallant steed sobbing. On—on still—till we come to the Badgworthy Water, a river, or large burn, running down by the covert bearing that name.

Now, Sam, show yourself worthy to bear the horn, for there are few things requiring nicer judgment and discretion than making a cast in water. On go the pack—they reach the stream, and check for a moment. Then half the hounds rush through it, while many swim down stream, giving tongue as they go, and apparently hunting the deer down the water.

'Beware! for this is a critical moment. If the stag has gone *up* stream the water will carry the scent downwards, and the hounds will go on and on for miles in a different direction from that in which the deer has gone. In this instance I will wager he has not gone *far* down stream, for from our vantage-ground, as we come over the crest of the hill, I saw the sheep feeding quietly in yonder coombe by the river side, not huddled as they would have been, if our quarry had passed near them—and, moreover, I descried a watchful heron which was fishing in a shallow pool, while his companion flapped heavily and securely down the water in quest of other feeding-grounds. If our deer had passed these shy birds, they would have been careering high above our heads in search of more quiet and undisturbed retreats. For such signs as these the huntsman must ever be on the look-out, if he desire to match his powers of reasoning and observation against the cunning and sagacity of a deer. . . .

'He has refreshed himself in a deep pool close to the spot where he took soil, and without staying long to enjoy the luxury of the bath, has risen, though not "fresh as the foam," again to stretch across the moor, and if possible, to seek safety among the herd on Scab Hill, whose numbers saved him only last week.

'Away! away! over the stone walls and across the forest. Fortunately not one deer is in the line to divert the attention of the hounds; though far to the left are to be seen against the sky-line, the forms of some fifteen or twenty deer, whose watchful eyes and ears have seen sights and heard sounds which bode danger, and warn them to be on the alert. The Master goes gallantly to the fore on "Little Nell," though his

headdress, consisting of a bandana twisted about his brows, looks rather "out of order." He *had* a hat, but in the deep ground the other side of the last wall, he shook it off, and in the next stride Little Nell's forefoot planted it two feet deep in a bog. Onward stride the hounds, mute as mice, and the select few ride anxiously and carefully, hands well down and helping their horses as best they can, each man wishing in his heart of hearts that there may be a friendly check ere long, except perhaps old Mr. Snow, of Oare, whose threescore years and ten have not tamed the warmth of his blood or his ardour in the chase, and who now is in the very height of his happiness, for below him he sees his own farms and the roof of his own homestead, and under him "Norah Creina" strides along in her lashing, easy gallop, with the confidence which an intimate knowledge of every sod beneath her feet inspires and creates. The ground is open. A little on a decline and far away, close, close to the wall of the Scab Hill enclosure, I see something moving along "with hobbling gait and high" which I cannot doubt is our quarry. Unless the herd shelter him, "this day the stag shall die." Forward! forward! and again the hounds lash and stride over the long sedges, the faintest whimper possible from time to time announcing that they are running on a burning scent, but have too much to do to be able to own it.

'We gain the wall of the enclosure over which the pack scrambles with difficulty while the remaining horsemen seek a friendly gate. A shepherd has viewed the stag, and to our joy reports that he has not joined the herd, but turned to the right to seek the covert, and take soil in the limpid waters of the impetuous Lynn. Down rush the hounds, and we reach the ford in time to see the body of the pack struggling in the foaming waters of the torrent, while the leading hounds are carrying on the scent up the opposite steep. Onward we urge our sobbing steeds, though some of the few who still keep their place look as though they had had enough . . . and on Countisbury Common catch the fresh and welcome breezes of the Channel,

and slacken our speed as the pack turn unmistakably towards the sea where we know our gallant stag will stop to refresh himself. Nor are we mistaken, for as we turn into one of the steep paths of Glenthorne overhanging the Channel we see below us our quarry dripping from his recent bath, standing proudly on a rock surrounded by the flowing tide, and watching his pursuers with anxious eyes. The hounds bay him from the land: one adventurer from the pack takes the water and already is at the base of the cliff on which the deer stands. Poor victim! Scarce has he lifted himself from the waves when he is dashed back again by an unerring blow struck quick as lightning by the forefoot of the deer, and floats a corpse in the waters from which a moment ago he emerged.

'Meantime the news of the chase has brought together the rustics who are working near the spot. Their endeavours to dislodge the stag from his stronghold by shouts and stones are successful and, dashing through the water, he reaches the cliffs, gains a craggy path leading along them, and stretches away above Glenthorne House towards Yeanworth. But it is evident his race is run. The heavy gallop, the faltering stride and the lowered head, proclaim that his strength is failing. The check has increased his stiffness, though it has enabled him partially to regain his wind. His pursuers are not to be baffled, and their speed now exceeds his. He is unable again to face the open, runs feebly and painfully along the beaten paths, and turning through the woods towards the sea, he reaches the edge of the cliff, just above the boathouse and beach of Glenthorne. His foes are close behind. He gives one wild and hurried look of fear, and dares the desperate leap. It is done. He has jumped from a height of at least thirty feet on to the shore, and in the next moment is floating in the salt sea waves. Fortunately, one or two sportsmen on the beach keep back the eager hounds, or some of the best of the pack would in all probability have been sacrificed, or at least maimed, in the attempt to follow their quarry in his deed of daring. A few minutes suffice to man a boat, and put a rope round the horns

of the deer. The victim is dragged in triumph to the beach, the knife is at his throat, and amid the baying of the pack, and the loud whoo' whoops of the crowd, the noble and gallant animal yields up his life.'

The generally accepted idea that carted-deer hunting is an invention of degenerate modernity is mistaken. The Royal Buckhounds enlarged deer from a cart at the beginning of George II.'s reign. There are references in the Accounts of the Great Wardrobe to the 'deer van' or 'deer waggon' as far back as 1630, but there is nothing to show that this vehicle was used for conveying the deer to the meet. It *may* have been so used: but its main purpose was to convey deer which had been caught in other royal forests to the park at Windsor. The earliest mention of carted deer refers to Saturday, 14th September 1728, when 'an elk' (presumably a wapiti) was uncarted at Windsor and gave a brilliant run:[1] and from this time forward carted deer were frequently used by the royal pack. Hounslow Heath, Sunbury and Richmond were often the scenes of meets to hunt a carted deer during the years ensuing, and there is at least one mention of the deer being enlarged at Epsom. In those days the deer cart, or 'waggon' as it was then called, was only brought into use when occasion required. Until the end of the eighteenth century the system varied: a deer was either cut out from a herd in the Park, was turned out from Swinley paddocks and hunted therefrom, or it was carted at Swinley and conveyed 'to such place and at such time as may have been previously appointed.'

Some very long runs have been given by deer. On 26th January 1899, the Ripley and Knaphill got on the line of an outlying hind near Lord Pirbright's house and ran her for 5 hours 40 minutes till whipped off at dark near Woking: a thirty-miles point, and much more as hounds ran. During February of the present year the Mid Kent took an outlier after a thirty-mile run, and the Essex a few days later enlarged a deer which gave a run of the same length. On 20th September

[1] *History of the Royal Buckhounds*, by J. P Hore.

1880 the Devon and Somerset lost their stag after a thirty-mile run : he beat them, as many a stag has done, before and since, by putting out to sea, whence he was rescued by fishermen.

Deer make extraordinarily big jumps on occasion. Lord Ribblesdale says that the deer Runaway earned his name by jumping the oak palings of Swinley paddocks, 8 feet high : he had been startled by the crack of a whip. A fallow buck which, having escaped from Chippenham Park, was run by harriers, made two wonderful leaps to regain its old quarters : the first 27 feet over a rail and bank into a road, the next over the park wall which, with the bank on which it stood, was 9 feet in height : the two consecutive leaps covered 42 feet.

Fallow deer have given some long runs : but perhaps they are more remarkable for their craft than for straight running. Mr. George Race maintains that a fallow deer shows greater resource in eluding hounds than either fox or hare. ' I have seen them when beaten jump into a brook and submerge themselves till only their nose remained above water. They will spring sideways from their tracks and crouch in covert while hounds over-run the scent. I have seen them drop down in a wood of a year's growth in a large bunch of grass and briars, hiding cleverly where you would think it impossible for so large an animal to find concealment.'

Cervine methods, in a word, have not changed during the centuries : ' and bicause they should have no sent of him nor vent him he wil trusse all his iiii feete under his belly and will blow and breath upon ye grounde in some moyst place in such sorte yt I have seene the houndes passe by such an Harte within a yeard of him and never vent him . . . if he have taken the soyle in such sort, that of all his body you shal see nothing but his nose : and I have seen divers lye so untyll the houndes have beene upon them before they would ryse ' (*The Booke of Hunting*, 1576).

Stag-hunting :
Stag in Water

STAG-HUNTING

THE LORD OF THE VALLEY

A STAG-HUNTER'S SONG

Hunters are fretting, and hacks in a lather,
  Sportsmen arriving from left and from right,
Bridle-roads bringing them, see how they gather!
  Dotting the meadows in scarlet and white.
Foot-people staring, and horsemen preparing;
  Now there 's a murmur—a stir—and a shout!
Fresh from his carriage, as bridegroom in marriage,
  The Lord of the Valley leaps gallantly out.

Time, the Avenger, neglecting, or scorning,
  Gazes about him in beauteous disdain,
Lingers to toy with the whisper of morning,
  Daintily, airily, paces the plain.
Then in a second, his course having reckoned,
  Line that all Leicestershire cannot surpass,
Fleet as a swallow, when summer winds follow,
  The Lord of the Valley skims over the grass.

Where shall we take him? Ah! now for the tussle,
  These are the beauties can stoop and can fly;
Down go their noses, together they bustle,
  Dashing, and flinging, and scorning to cry!
Never stand dreaming, while yonder they 're streaming;
  If ever you meant it, man, mean it to-day!
Bold ones are riding and fast ones are striding,
  The Lord of the Valley is Forward! Away!

Hard on his track, o'er the open and facing,
  The cream of the country, the pick of the chase,
Mute as a dream, his pursuers are racing,
  Silence, you know, 's the criterion of *pace*!
Swarming and driving, while man and horse striving
  By cramming and hugging, scarce live with them still;
The fastest are failing, the truest are tailing,
  The Lord of the Valley is over the hill!

WITH HORSE AND HOUND

Yonder a steed is rolled up with his master;
  Here, in a double, another lies cast;
Thicker and faster comes grief and disaster,
  All but the good ones are weeded at last.
Hunters so limber, at water and timber,
  Now on the causeway are fain to be led;
Beat, but still going, a countryman sowing
  Has sighted the Lord of the Valley ahead.

There in the bottom, see, sluggish and idle,
  Steals the dark stream where the willow-tree grows!
Harden your heart, and catch hold of your bridle!
  Steady him—rouse him—and over he goes!
Look! in a minute a dozen are in it!
  But Forward! Hark Forward! for draggled and blown,
A check though desiring, with courage untiring
  The Lord of the Valley is holding his own.

Onward we struggle in sorrow and labour,
  Lurching and lobbing, and 'bellows to mend';
Each, while he smiles at the plight of his neighbour,
  Only is anxious to get to the end.
Horses are flagging, hounds drooping and lagging,
  Yet gathering down yonder, where, press as they may,
Mobbed, driven, and haunted, but game and undaunted,
  The Lord of the Valley stands proudly at bay!

Then here 's to the Baron,[1] and all his supporters—
  The thrusters—the skirters—the whole of the tale;
And here 's to the fairest of all hunting quarters,
  The widest of pastures—three cheers for the Vale;[2]
For the lovely she-rider, the rogue, who beside her,
  Finds breath in a gallop his suit to advance;
The hounds, for our pleasure, that time us the measure,
  The Lord of the Valley, that leads us the dance!

G. J. Whyte Melville,
Baily's Magazine, Feb. 1868.

[1] Rothschild.

[2] Of Aylesbury.

HARE-HUNTING

THE old system of hare-hunting with slow hounds, which were frequently followed on foot, was going out of fashion at the end of the eighteenth century. Sport with the Southern hound 'or such heavy dogs as Sussex Gentlemen use on the weald,' says William Blaine in 1781, appealed to him 'that delights in a long chace of six hours, often more, and to be with the dogs all the time.' The delights of such prolonged hunts, however, had begun to pall even on the most enthusiastic; and really, unless the music for which Southern hounds were so famous might be regarded as the principal feature of the business, we cannot feel surprise. These hounds had splendid noses, but their appreciation of scent had drawbacks. On occasion, overcome by the delights that were in their nostrils, the whole cry would sit down on the line and, heeding naught else, upraise their voices in chorus of ecstasy. This exhibition of music and emotion too frequently resulted in the loss of the hare; which, remarks Blaine temperately, 'is by some thought necessary to complete the sport.'

Slow and phlegmatic, 'these grave sort of dogs' were peculiarly amenable to discipline and were usually 'hunted under the pole,' as the old term had it. The huntsman carried a light leaping-pole with which to vault fences and brooks, and he had the pack under such command that he could stop them at pleasure by throwing down the pole before the pack. Sir Roger de Coverley's 'Stop hounds,' described by Budgell in the *Spectator*,[1] were manifestly of the Southern breed.

[1] 12th July 1711. Eustace Budgell, cousin of Addison, was a frequent contributor. We need not doubt that he describes such a hunt as any country gentleman enjoyed in Queen Anne's time.

'Sir Roger being at present too old for fox-hunting, to keep himself in action, has disposed of his beagles and got a pack of stop-hounds. What these want in speed, he endeavours to make amends for by the deepness of their mouths and the variety of their notes, which are suited in such manner to each other, that the whole cry makes up a complete concert. He is so nice in this particular, that a gentleman having made him a present of a very fine hound the other day, the knight returned it by the servant with a great many expressions of civility; but desired him to tell his master, that the dog he had sent was indeed a most excellent bass, but that at present he only wanted a counter-tenor. Could I believe my friend had ever read Shakespeare, I should certainly conclude he had taken the hint from Theseus in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*:—

> "My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
> So flu'd, so sanded;[1] and their heads are hung
> With ears that sweep away the morning dew,
> Crook-knee'd and dew-lap'd like Thessalian bulls,
> Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouths like bells,
> Each under each. A cry more tunable
> Was never halloo'd to, nor cheer'd with horn."

'Sir Roger is so keen at this sport, that he has been out almost every day since I came down; and upon the chaplain's offering to lend me his easy pad, I was prevailed on yesterday morning to make one of the company. I was extremely pleased as we rid along, to observe the general benevolence of all the neighbourhood towards my friend. The farmers' sons thought themselves happy if they could open a gate for the good old knight as he passed by; which he generally requited with a nod or a smile, and a kind inquiry after their fathers or uncles.

'After we had rid about a mile from home, we came upon a large heath, and the sportsmen began to beat.[2] They had

[1] Marked with small specks.

[2] 'Some huntsmen trail to a hare, others trouble themselves not at all about trailing

done so for some time, when, as I was at a little distance from the rest of the company, I saw a hare pop from a small furze-brake almost under my horse's feet. I marked the way she took, which I endeavoured to make the company sensible of by extending my arm; but to no purpose, till Sir Roger, who knows that none of my extraordinary motions are insignificant, rode up to me, and asked me, if puss was gone that way? Upon my answering yes, he immediately called in the dogs, and put them upon the scent. As they were going off, I heard one of the country-fellows muttering to his companion, "that 'twas a wonder they had not lost all their sport, for want of the silent gentleman's crying Stole away."

'This, with my aversion to leaping hedges, made me withdraw to a rising ground, from whence I could have the pleasure of the whole chase, without the fatigue of keeping in with the hounds. The hare immediately threw them above a mile behind her; but I was pleased to find, that instead of running straight forwards, or in hunter's language, "flying the country," as I was afraid she might have done, she wheeled about, and described a sort of circle round the hill where I had taken my station, in such a manner as gave me a very distinct view of the sport. I could see her first pass by, and the dogs sometime afterwards unravelling the whole track she had made, and following her through all her doubles. I was at the same time delighted in observing that deference which the rest of the pack paid to each particular hound, according to the character he had acquired amongst them. If they were at a fault, and an old hound of reputation opened but once, he was immediately followed by the whole cry; while a raw dog, or one who was a noted liar, might have yelped his heart out, without being taken notice of.

'The hare now, after having squatted two or three times,

to her, but proceed with the company to threshing the hedges for a wide compass, being so sparing of their pains as often to beat over as beat a hare up. For my part I think trailing fairly and starting the nicest part of the whole pastime, provided wind and weather permit' (William Blaine).

and been put up again as often, came still nearer to the place where she was at first started. The dogs pursued her, and these were followed by the jolly knight, who rode upon a white gelding, encompassed by his tenants and servants, and cheering his hounds with all the gaiety of five and twenty.

'One of the sportsmen rode up to me, and told me, that he was sure the chase was almost at an end, because the old dogs, which had hitherto lain behind, now headed the pack. The fellow was in the right. Our hare took a large field just under us, followed by the full cry In View. I must confess the brightness of the weather, the cheerfulness of everything around me, the chiding of the hounds, which was returned upon us in a double echo from two neighbouring hills, with the hallooing of the sportsmen, and the sounding of the horn, lifted my spirits into a most lively pleasure, which I freely indulged because I was sure it was innocent. If I was under any concern, it was on the account of the poor hare, that was now quite spent, and almost within the reach of her enemies; when the huntsman getting forward threw down his pole before the dogs. They were now within eight yards of that game which they had been pursuing for almost as many hours; yet on the signal before-mentioned they all made a sudden stand, and though they continued opening as much as before, durst not once attempt to pass beyond the pole. At the same time Sir Roger rode forward, and alighting took up the hare in his arms; which he soon after delivered up to one of his servants with an order, if she could be kept alive, to let her go in his great orchard; where it seems he has several of these prisoners of war, who live together in a very comfortable captivity. I was highly pleased to see the discipline of the pack, and the good-nature of the knight, who could not find in his heart to murder a creature that had given him so much diversion.'

The 'beagles' of which Sir Roger had disposed would be the hounds known then and later as 'Northern Beagles,' whose original home appears to have been Lancashire. They

were used for fox-hunting and, as the old slow system of hare-hunting lost vogue, for that sport also.

Such discipline as Budgell admired can be matched among foxhounds. It is recorded of Mr. Meynell that one day, in the Market Harborough country, he was drawing a thin gorse covert, and the fox was in danger of being chopped. He called to Jack Raven to take the hounds away, and at one of his usual rates every hound stopped and was taken to the hedge side. Meynell then called three steady hounds by name and threw them into the covert. The fox was so loth to break that the three hunted him for about ten minutes in the hearing of the whole pack ; but so perfect was the discipline, they lay quietly about Raven's horse until the fox went away. Then the Master gave ' his most energetic, thrilling halloo,' and every hound flew to him. An instance of discipline equally striking is cited on the authority of Sir Arthur Halkett in Lord Ribblesdale's book, *The Queen's Hounds*. And let us not forget the vast difference of temperament between Sir Roger de Coverley's ' Stop hounds ' and the foxhound.

It has been remarked by a modern writer that if Sir Roger's rescue of the hare exemplified the usual practice, those Southern hounds must have been above such material considerations as blood. There is much reason to think that the chase was far more than the quarry to the Southern hound: which suggests the reflection that fox-flesh is an acquired taste, and one that all hounds have not yet acquired. Welsh hounds do not always break up their fox, unless urged on to do it or encouraged by English companions: the late Sir Richard Green Price told me he had ' often known them leave their dead fox if they kill him by themselves.' The foxhounds of the fells also do not break up their quarry. Hounds would not eat fox-flesh in Turbervile's day (1575) ; but when Nicholas Cox wrote in 1685 he said, ' Many hounds will eat the fox with eagerness.' Evidently they had learned to do it during the hundred years preceding.

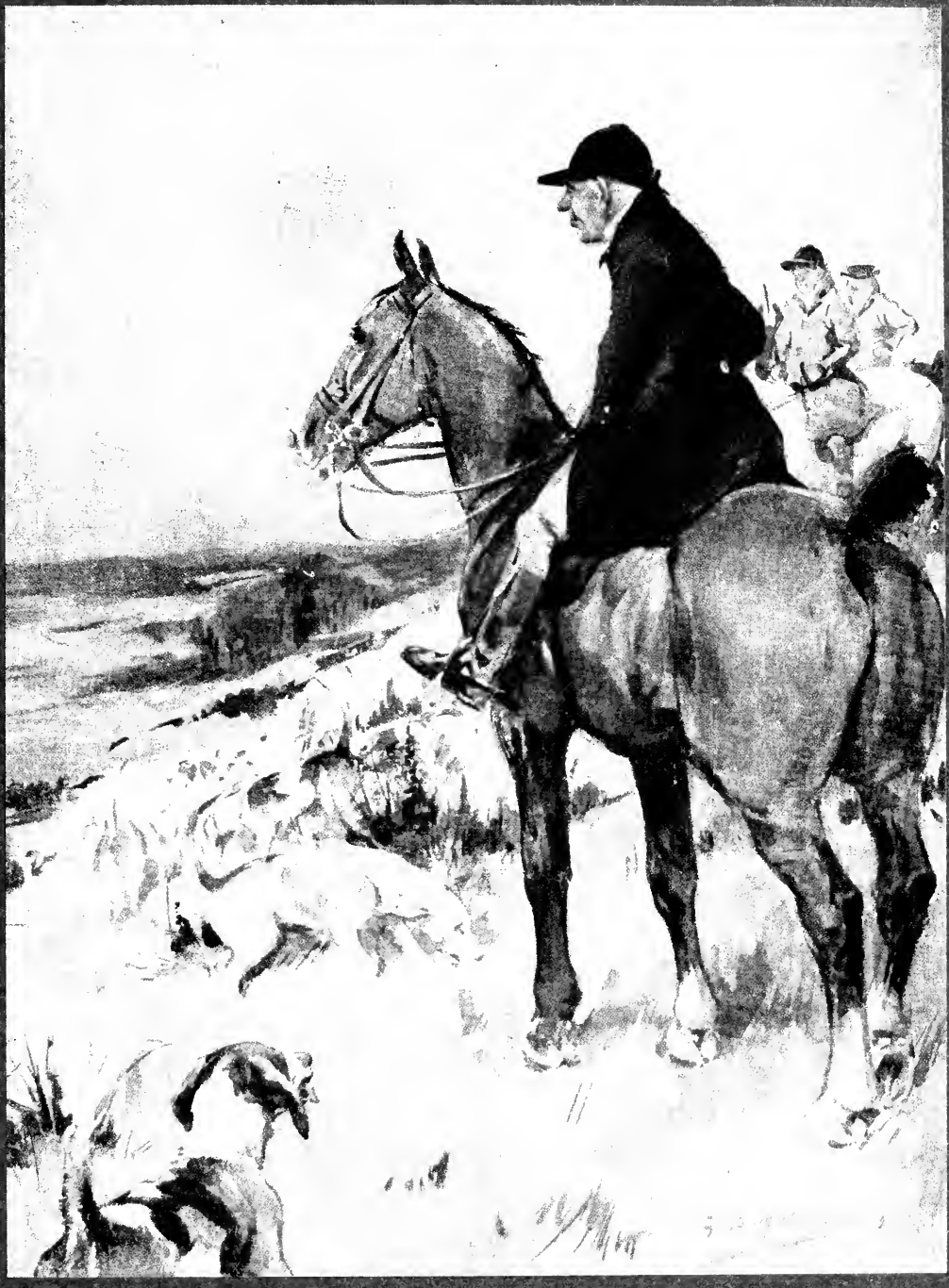
It is permissible to suspect the unqualified charity of the

motives which actuated Sir Roger in ordering that hare to be turned out in the orchard. Hares are not the most desirable live stock to maintain among fruit trees; it is likely that in Queen Anne's time, as at the end of the century, the practice of hunting 'basket' or 'trap' hares may have been in vogue. No more scruple was held about hunting basket hares than bag foxes. Beckford, you remember, kept a paled warren with brick meuses, and trapped a hare whenever he happened to want one for hunting or coursing.

To write of hare-hunting and omit at least a passage from *The Chace* would savour of heresy:—

'. . . As captive boys,
Cow'd by the ruling rod, and haughty frowns
Of pedagogues severe, from their hard tasks
If once dismiss'd, no limits can contain,
The tumult rais'd within their little breasts,
But give a loose to all their frolic play:
So from their kennel rush the joyous pack;
A thousand wanton gaieties express
Their inward ecstasy, their pleasing sport
Once more indulg'd, and liberty restor'd.
The rising sun that o'er th' horizon peeps,
As many colours from their glossy skins
Beaming reflects, as paint the various bow
When April show'rs descend. Delightful scene!
Where all around is gay, men, horses, dogs,
And in each smiling countenance appears
Fresh-blooming health, and universal joy.
Huntsman, lead on! behind the clust'ring pack
Submiss attend, hear with respect thy whip
Loud-clanging, and thy harsher voice obey:
Spare not the straggling cur that wildly roves,
But let thy brisk assistant on his back
Imprint thy just resentments, let each lash
Bite to the quick, till howling he return
And whining creep amid the trembling crowd.
Here on this verdant spot, where Nature kind
With double blessings crowns the farmer's hopes;

Hare-hunting :
An Old-fashioned Huntsman



HARE-HUNTING

Where flow'rs autumnal spring, and the rank mead
Affords the wand'ring hares a rich repast;
Throw off thy ready pack. See, where they spread
And range around, and dash the glitt'ring dew.
If some stanch hound, with his authentic voice,
Avow the recent trail, the jostling tribe
Attend his call, then with one mutual cry
The welcome news confirm, and echoing hills
Repeat the pleasing tale. See how they thread
The brakes, and up yon furrow drive along!
But quick they back recoil, and wisely check
Their eager haste; then o'er the fallow'd ground
How leisurely they work, and many a pause
Th' harmonious concert breaks; till more assur'd
With joy redoubled the low valleys ring.
What artful labyrinths perplex their way!
Ah! there she lies; how close! she pants, she doubts
If now she lives; she trembles as she sits,
With horror seiz'd. The wither'd grass that clings
Around her head, of the same russet hue,
Almost deceiv'd my sight, had not her eyes
With life full-beaming her vain wiles betray'd.
At distance draw thy pack, let all be hush'd,
No clamour loud, no frantic joy be heard,
Lest the wild hound run gadding o'er the plain
Untractable, nor hear thy chiding voice.
Now gently put her off; see how direct
To her known mews she flies! Here, huntsman, bring
(But without hurry) all thy jolly hounds,
And calmly lay them on. How low they stoop,
And seem to plough the ground; then all at once
With greedy nostrils snuff the foaming steam
That glads their flutt'ring hearts. As winds let loose
From the dark caverns of the blust'ring god,
They burst away, and sweep the dewy lawn,
Hope gives them wings, while she's spurr'd on by fear,
The welkin rings, men, dogs, hills, rocks, and woods,
In the full concert join. Now, my brave youths,
Stripp'd for the chace, give all your souls to joy!
See how their coursers, than the mountain roe

More fleet, the verdant carpet skim, thick clouds
Snorting they breathe, their shining hoofs scarce print
The grass unbruis'd; with emulation fir'd,
They strain to lead the field, top the barr'd gate,
O'er the deep ditch exulting bound, and brush
The thorny-twining hedge: the riders bend
O'er their arch'd necks; with steady hands by turns
Indulge their speed, or moderate their rage.
Where are their sorrows, disappointments, wrongs,
Vexations, sickness, cares? All, all are gone,
And with the panting winds lag far behind.
Huntsman! her gait observe; if in wide rings
She wheel her mazy way, in the same round
Persisting still, she 'll foil the beaten track,
But if she fly, and with the fav'ring wind
Urge her bold course, less intricate thy task:
Push on thy pack. Like some poor exil'd wretch,
The frighted chace leaves her late dear abodes,
O'er plains remote she stretches far away,
Ah! never to return! For greedy death
Hov'ring exults, secure to seize his prey.
Hark! from yon covert, where those tow'ring oaks
Above the humble copse aspiring rise,
What glorious triumphs burst in ev'ry gale
Upon our ravish'd ears! The hunters shout,
The clanging horns swell their sweet-winding notes,
The pack wide-op'ning load the trembling air
With various melody; from tree to tree
The propagated cry redoubling bounds,
And winged zephyrs waft the floating joy
Thro' all the regions near. Afflictive birch
No more the schoolboy dreads; his prison broke,
Scamp'ring he flies, nor heeds his master's call;
The weary traveller forgets his road,
And climbs the adjacent hill; the ploughman leaves
Th' unfinished furrow; nor his bleating flocks
Are now the shepherd's joy; men, boys, and girls,
Desert th' unpeopled village: and wild crowds
Spread o'er the plain, by the sweet frenzy seized.
Look how she pants! and o'er yon op'ning glade

Slips glancing by; while, at the further end
The puzzling pack unravel, wile by wile,
Maze within maze. The covert's utmost bound
Slyly she skirts: behind them cautious creeps,
And in that very track, so lately stain'd
By all the steaming crowd, seems to pursue
The foe she flies. . . .
Now the poor chace
Begins to flag, to her last shifts reduc'd.
From brake to brake she flies, and visits all
Her well-known haunts, where once she rang'd secure,
With love and plenty blest. See! there she goes,
She reels along, and by her gait betrays
Her inward weakness. See, how black she looks!
The sweat that clogs th' obstructed pores, scarce leaves
A languid scent. And now in open view
See, see, she flies! each eager hound exerts
His utmost speed, and stretches ev'ry nerve,
How quick she turns! their gaping jaws eludes,
And yet a moment lives; till round enclos'd
By all the greedy pack, with infant screams
She yields her breath, and there reluctant dies.'

Passages in Somerville's poem appear hardly in accordance with his avowed principles. His field, unless poetic licence set practical knowledge at naught, had to ride for all they were worth to live with the pack; though granting the presence of thrusters, we need not imagine speed comparable to that of the modern hunter. Somerville himself could not have ridden very hard, as we are told that he used to pull out his favourite hunter, Old Ball, three times a week: of this useful animal his owner has left record that he 'would not hold out two days together.' Old Ball was a 'real good English hunter standing about 15 hands high, with black legs, short back, high in the shoulders, large barrel, cropped ears, and a white blaze.'

The Royal Harriers, which had been re-established in 1730,[1] seem to have been the first pack of hounds to advertise meets. During the Regency they were kennelled at Brighton, then at

[1] The pack had been given up in James II.'s reign.

the zenith of its fame as a winter resort, and met ' for the amusement of all who choose to join the hunt ' on Mondays near Portslade Windmill, on Wednesdays near Patcham, and on Fridays on the Race Hill. The field was not always well behaved: upon a day in October 1804 the huntsman was compelled to go home ' before the accustomed time ' by reason of the misconduct of men who persisted in riding before the hounds.

Five or six miles is accounted a good point for a hare when ' forced to make out endwaies,' as Turbervile so happily puts it. Mr. Eames, Master of the Cootley, has been good enough to tell me of a run which must be unique for length. It occurred in the time of his grandfather sixty or seventy years ago: finding near Chard, hounds ran their hare to Wellington Monument and killed her after a fifteen-mile point.

Mr. George Race, now in his seventieth year of Mastership (surely the ' record ' in the whole history of hunting), once saw a run of twelve miles. He writes: ' It took place on 28th December 1848. We found our hare in Litlington field, and she went straight to the bottom part of Morden Heath, where there was a wood sale going on. The people turned her to the left, and she went over the Royston and Baldock road, up the hill into the open, nearly to the top of Royston town. Here she came down the hill, and was evidently going back to Litlington field, but there were so many foot-people, carriages and waggons passing, she would not cross the road, and turned up the hill again, and leaving Mr. Thurnall's gorse just on our right, went over the open to Seven Riders, where a waggon turned her to the right. She went up the hill to Reed village and straight across the fields to the Old North Road, up which she ran as hard as she could go to just below Backland, where a road-mender turned her to the left over the fields down to Capon's Wood. Here hounds raced into view and bowled her over in a rackway in the wood. The time was not taken, but it was a fine run. Mr. William Pope, Mr. Chas. Lindsell (Master of the Cambridgeshire for seventeen years), and myself

were the only people who really saw this run. The greater part of it was in the Puckeridge country.'

Mr. Race recalls another remarkable run, straight—and eight miles from point to point.

Mr. Baron D. Webster, for ten years master and owner of the Haldon, has kindly sent me some interesting notes :—' I have, during my experience, seen less of the extraordinary cunning of the hare than might have been expected. Where our country is mostly moor or woodland, hares are scarce, and they run far more like foxes than they do in an enclosed district. . . .

' During my first season as Master of the Haldon we had a run which for pace and distance can very seldom have been surpassed. On Monday, 14th February 1898, we met at Ashwell Cross : we did no good with our first hare. It was the second one that gave the run : we found her exactly at one o'clock on the open moor between Lidwell and Newtake. She got up behind the hounds, so they did not see her, and they were laid on the line with as little noise as possible. Our hare made at once for Newtake, and hounds ran at a fair pace the whole length of this long narrow gorse brake and checked a moment at the Ashwell end. Hitting off the line again, they ran well over the open part of Humber Moor and seemed to be making for the Pheasant covert about Lindridge House, but turning away from Lindridge they ran well down the green lane, and skirting Luton Moor, were brought to their noses on some plough till they came to the dreaded Luton Bottom. Crossing this deep " goyle " or dingle, hounds hesitated a little on the further side and gave such of the field who were inclined to negotiate it time to find the only possible crossing. Those who did not care to face the difficulties of the goyle saw no more of the hunt. The hare then took us into Rixtail Moor (she had been crossing a good deal of partly enclosed moorland) and hence she ran the road for a very long distance. I kept the now much reduced field well behind hounds, but had just begun to fear we had pressed them over the point where the

hare had left the road, when they turned to the right and once more we were racing on the rough moorland. It seemed certain that the hare was making for the depths of Luscombe Wood, an enormous covert, and the huntsman with one detachment of the field rode for that, while I with the remainder kept as near as possible to hounds, now running hard. A nasty fence caused us almost to lose hounds, such was the pace they were going, but I just caught sight of old black-and-tan Gambler doing his best to catch up the body of the pack outside the wood which hounds never entered.

"They have gone for Dawlish town," cried a labourer from a high bank as we swept past him; and presently one of the field saw them "miles ahead," driving up the mound on which Dawlish reservoir is situated. Wire and locked gates in a country then (fourteen years ago) entirely new to us caused loss of time, but when we got up to and beyond the reservoir I saw to my relief the hounds at check not far below, in a large field of wheat. Just as I was going to take hold of them, the huntsman—who had had a terribly rough journey from Luscombe Wood—arrived: he made a bold forward cast and hit off the line at a gate. From here hounds simply flew; crossing Secmaton Trench, which bothered us all considerably, they raced to Langdon Lodge on the Dawlish and Starcross road, where they came to a decided check. Something was said about a holloa forward, but I heard nothing myself, and feeling sure the hare had thrown up close by, persevered in trying every hedgerow and bit of covert. It was in vain, and I had just given the word for home when a groom, riding bare-backed, galloped up and said he had seen the hare on the Warren, where the golf links are: his was the holloa that had been heard. After such a run as she had given I felt sure that if we did not have the hare, some one else would: so to the utter astonishment of the golfers and the crowd on the sea front of Exmouth just across the Exe, we galloped up to the links and hit off the line in a moment. The hare soon got up under my horse, and I never saw one so black; she ran as strong as ever, though,

while the high sandhills and the frequent views hounds got, were all in her favour until we at last pressed her on to the open beach, when we felt sure of her. Hounds, however, had got their heads up, and feeling sure that the hare was dodging among the sandhills they came unwillingly and slowly to the holloa. Eventually she took the water close under my horse: I could have jumped off and caught her easily, but was unwilling to spoil such a run as this by an irregular kill. Nothing we could do availed to make hounds see her: the current was strong, and by the time I realised that they could not be got to follow her, she was out of reach. Boats came out from Exmouth, but were too late to pick her up, and she sank before our eyes. I was greatly annoyed with myself then for not having picked her up when I might have done so.

'From Ashwell to the far end of the Warren, where the hare went into the sea, is just over eight miles, but as hounds ran it was very much farther: to Langdon Lodge it was nine miles, allowing for the round by Lindridge and Luton, and as to that point the time was an hour and a quarter, it will be admitted that this was one of the finest runs on record.

'These exceptional runs,' Mr. Webster adds, 'happily result almost always in a kill.'

Concerning the manœuvre usually first tried by a hunted hare, he gives a good example:—'We were once hunting over Little Haldon, an extensive open moor that marches with Luton Moor, an enclosed area containing boggy brakes which form excellent covert. About 150 yards from the bank enclosing Luton Moor we ran through a small patch of gorse: and on coming to the bank hounds checked a moment, then turned and ran back to the gorse led by a reliable hound named Pleader. I was near enough to see Pleader's eye, and I knew he was right and was running for blood, so stopped the cry of war' heel and forbade the huntsman trying over the bank for a minute or two. I heard myself called uncomplimentary names, but Pleader was right. He *almost* had the

hare in the gorse: she broke under his nose, raced away up hill, and thanks to the advantage this naturally gave, saved her scut.

'Hares will make leaps almost incredible from the open field into the hedge, and will do the same at a gate. They fly to gates to escape the exertion of getting over a fence wherein they know no certain meuse; as soon as harriers become at all unsteady they will forsake the line and make for the first gate or rail forward—a very bad habit.

'The hare's peculiarity of turning up or down a fence after passing through it instead of going straight away makes running a fox, which does just the reverse, ruinous to harriers. If good harriers are not pressed by horsemen they will at once try up and down the fence: let but one horseman go over before the pack is again settled on the line, and he spoils everything. A steady field makes a steady pack.

'Here is a curious fact that may interest you:—There is in our country a certain estate with a very large demesne, and we are only allowed to hunt over an unenclosed portion of the property. The demesne, which is luckily quite on our boundary, is full of hares, but they are very seldom seen out of it. On three occasions I have known hares make straight for this demesne, all three having been found within a few yards of the same spot which is at a considerable distance from the place referred to and, moreover, on the further side of the river Teign. We killed all three, one, by the way, in the river itself, after runs as hard and straight as possible. But why should all these three bucks have been found on that one spot? It may be conjectured that the gentlemen were tired of the ladies of their own district and came hither in search of variety: but against this must be set the fact that hares are by no means plentiful in the district about the place where the three were found.

'Hare-hunting, according to the Almanac, ends on 1st March, but for my own part I like to go on till Lady Day, 25th March, because, as in fox-hunting, the best sport of the season is obtained during February and March. And here I

may remark that when, after 1st February or thereabouts, you find two hares together, be sure and lay the pack on the line of the one that goes away first, for that is sure to be the buck. It is true that he *may* keep circling round to the doe, but on the other hand he is just as likely to fly to the district whence he came, and may then give a straight run with an exceptional point.'

There be those who maintain that the hare is every whit as resourceful as the fox. Was it not Beckford who attributed to her cunning the hare's legendary connection with witches? A beaten hare will go to ground in drain or rabbit hole: in the *Field* of 15th February 1875 there is record of a ferret having bolted a rabbit from a burrow, which rabbit was quickly followed by a hare which appeared with the ferret clinging to her. Whether harriers had recently been in the neighbourhood does not appear. Mr. Webster once had this same experience. The Haldon got a hare away from a dense woodland known as Black Forest,[1] and after a fine gallop checked close to a house and buildings known as Gulliford. While trying to recover the line an astonished cry of 'A hare, a hare' was heard. The hunted hare had gone to ground in a bank which was being at that moment ferreted by people without guns, and one of the party caught the hare as she bolted (a ferret will bolt a hare in a moment). 'Never,' says Mr. Webster, 'spare a hare that goes to ground; she will do it again on the next opportunity, and the habit is very likely to be hereditary. He also remarks that anything in the shape of an open door offers peculiar attractions to the hunted hare. 'When hounds come to a decided check near buildings of any description, the huntsman should be most careful to try every open door. One may lose hares in all sorts of queer places, stables and outhouses and the like: it is also judicious to look behind anything like boxes or barrels or a pile of faggots. An old aunt of mine once saved a hare from the Eton Beagles by opening a door for her.'

[1] The woodlands in the Haldon country are seldom drawn by foxhounds as they are full of wild fallow deer.

OTTER-HUNTING

THE modern otter is born under a more fortunate star than his ancestor of a century ago. The net is barred, the spear disused, 'tailing' is discountenanced: if his foes cannot kill him by fair means he has nothing to fear from means now deemed foul.

Otter-hunting is an old sport: but there is some evidence to show that, in parts of the country at least, the otter was regarded as vermin the compassing of whose death was the first consideration. This is quite comprehensible when we consider how important a source of food supply in old days was the fish pond or stew maintained by them who dwelt far from sea or river.

'My servant informs me,' wrote Sir Henry Savill, of Sothill, Yorks., to his 'cossin Plompton,' 'that in your country there is a man that kills otters very well: wherefore I have sent him to get him to me for a week. I assure you they do me exceeding much harm in divers places. My folks see them daily, and I cannot kill them: my hounds be not used to them.' [1]

This was written on 8th November; the letter is not fully dated, but it seems to be referable to somewhere about 1540-1550. Sir Henry did not, it is evident, look upon the otters as affording opportunity of sport: the 'exceeding much harm' to which he refers can only mean to the fish in river or stew; and, regarding the otters as vermin, he simply wanted them killed down.

In the seventeenth century it would seem that hounds found the otter and the field killed him: says Nicolas Cox:—

[1] *The Plumpton Letters.*

'Remember in the Hunting of the Otter that you and your friends carry your otter spears to watch his vents: for that is the chief advantage and if you perceive where the otter swims under water, then strive to get to a stand before him where he would vent and then endeavour to strike him with your spear: but if you miss, pursue him with the hounds which, if they be good otter hounds and perfectly entered will come chauntering and trailing along by the Riverside and will beat every tree-root, every osier bed and tuft of Bull rushes: nay, sometimes they will take the water and beat it like a spaniel. And by these means the Otter can hardly escape you.'

Thus if you got home with your spear-thrust, there was nothing for the hounds to do: their task had been finished when they found the quarry. For them to hunt in the stream itself would seem to have been the exception.

Cox, of course, falls foul of the otter for his wasteful habits: 'For greediness he takes more than he knows what to do with.' The otter's shortcomings as a housekeeper have always been cast up against him, unfairly as it seems to me. What do we expect of him? Do we require of the hungry otter that he, reckoning the needs of the hour to a mouthful, shall suffer to pass an eight-pound grilse because a two-pound trout would serve his turn? Is he blameworthy for that he, wisely preferring fresh fish, omits to seek out what the carrion crow and his like may have left him of the meal of yesterday?

By the time Somerville wrote, otter-hunting had taken upon itself a form somewhat different; if we read him aright hounds played a more prominent part, though the spear used, as we gather, either to thrust or throw javelin-wise, was always ready to help them. That portion of *The Chace* which describes an otter-hunt is less familiar than the description of hare-hunting, though no whit its inferior in vigour, spirit and directness. It has, however, the demerit of blood-thirstiness. Either the poet entertained for the otter none of the sense of justice and fair play he cherished as the meed of the hare, or

he had qualms concerning the legitimacy, in a sporting sense, of the methods employed by the otter-hunter of his day. 'Give the otter a bad name and spear him,' seems to be the keynote of the lines: and he blackened the quarry's character by way of justifying the spear. Truly we had need be impressed with a sense of the otter's iniquity ere we could share the rejoicing when 'wriggling he hangs and grins and bites in vain.'

'This subtle spoiler of the beaver kind,
Far off, perhaps, where ancient alders shade
The deep still pool, within some hollow trunk,
Contrives his wicker couch; whence he surveys
His long purlieu, lord of the stream, and all
The finny shoals his own. But you, brave youths,
Dispute the felon's claim; try ev'ry root,
And ev'ry reedy bank; encourage all
The busy-spreading pack, that fearless plunge
Into the flood, and cross the rapid stream.
Bid rocks, and caves, and each resounding shore,
Proclaim your bold defiance; loudly raise
Each cheering voice, till distant hills repeat
The triumphs of the vale. On the soft sand
See there his seal impress'd! and on that bank
Behold the glitt'ring spoils, half-eaten fish,
Scales, fins and bones, the leavings of his feast.
Ah! on that yielding sag-bed, see, once more
His seal I view. O'er yon dank, rushy marsh
The sly goose-footed prowler bends his course,
And seeks the distant shallows. Huntsman, bring
Thy eager pack, and trail him to his couch.
Hark! the loud peal begins, the clam'rous joy,
The gallant chiding, loads the trembling air.
Ye Naiads fair, who o'er these floods preside,
Raise up your dripping heads above the wave
And hear our melody. Th' harmonious notes
Float with the stream; and ev'ry winding creek
And hollow rock, that o'er the dimpling flood
Nods pendant; still improve from shore to shore
Our sweet reiterated joys. What shouts!

OTTER-HUNTING

What clamour loud! What gay, heart-cheering sounds
Urge through the breathing brass their mazy way!
Not choirs of Tritons glad with sprightlier strains
The dancing billows, when proud Neptune rides
In triumph o'er the deep. How greedily
They snuff the fishy steam, that to each blade
Rank-scenting clings! See! how the morning dews
They sweep, that from their feet besprinkling drop
Dispers'd, and leave a track oblique behind.
Now on firm land they range; then in the flood
They plunge tumultuous; or thro' reedy pools
Rustling they work their way: no holt escapes
Their curious search. With quick sensation now
The foaming vapour stings; flutter their hearts,
And joy redoubled bursts from ev'ry mouth,
In laden symphonies. Yon hollow trunk,
That, with its hoary head incurv'd, salutes
The passing wave, must be the tyrant's fort,
And dread abode. How these impatient climb,
While others at the root incessant bay:
They put him down. See, there he dives along!
Th' ascending bubbles mark his gloomy way,
Quick fix the nets, and cut off his retreat
Into the shelt'ring deeps. Ah, there he vents!
The pack plunge headlong, and protruded spears
Menace destruction; while the troubled surge
Indignant foams, and all the scaly kind
Affrighted hide their heads. Wild tumult reigns,
And loud uproar. Ah, there once more he vents!
See, that bold hound has seiz'd him; down they sink,
Together lost: but soon shall he repent
His rash assault. See, there escap'd he flies,
Half-drown'd, and clambers up the slipp'ry bank
With ooze and blood distain'd. Of all the brutes,
Whether by nature form'd or by long use,
This artful diver best can bear the want
Of vital air. Unequal is the fight
Beneath the whelming element. Yet there
He lives not long; but respiration needs
At proper intervals. Again he vents;

Again the crowd attack. That spear has pierc'd
His neck; the crimson waves confess the wound.
Fix'd is the bearded lance, unwelcome guest
Where'er he flies; with him it sinks beneath,
With him it mounts; sure guide to ev'ry foe.
Inly he groans, nor can his tender wound
Bear the cold stream. So! to yon sedgy bank
He creeps disconsolate; his num'rous foes
Surround him, hounds and men. Pierc'd thro' and thro
On pointed spears they lift him high in air;
Wriggling he hangs, and grins, and bites in vain:
Bid the loud horns, in gaily-warbling strains,
Proclaim the felon's fate; he dies, he dies.
Rejoice, ye scaly tribes, and leaping dance
Above the waves, in sign of liberty
Restor'd; the cruel tyrant is no more.'

Otter-hunting had gone out of fashion in the earlier years of the nineteenth century. It 'was formerly considered excellent sport,' says Daniel by way of introducing his account of the method. He proceeds to say that it 'has still however its staunch admirers, who are apparently as zealous in this pursuit as in any other we read of. In 1796, near Bridgenorth, on the River Ware, four otters were killed; one stood three, another four hours before the dogs and was scarcely a minute out of sight. The hearts, etc., were dressed and eaten by many respectable people who attended the hunt and allowed to be very delicious.' I wonder what that 'etc.' covers.

On the other hand, there were those who held a very poor opinion of it. Mr. T. B. Johnson, who wrote the *Hunting Directory* in 1826, says: 'It is at present but little followed. Of all field amusements otter-hunting is perhaps the least interesting. Foxhounds, harriers, or indeed any kind of hounds, will pursue the otter: though the dog chiefly used for the purpose has been produced by a cross between the southern hound and the water spaniel. Those who have never witnessed otter-hunting, may form a tolerable notion of the business by imagining to the mind a superior duck-hunt.'

Ardent otter-hunters will hold this to be evidence in favour of duck-hunting, a sport now forgotten.

That there was 'brave hunting this water dog' in Devon two hundred and fifty years ago, we have on Izaak Walton's authority. Devonshire may claim the honour of possessing the oldest pack of otter-hounds now in existence. Mr. Pode of Slade established in 1825 what is now the Dartmoor pack. The Culmstock was started in 1837 by Mr. W. P. Collier. There were otter-hounds in Cumberland as far back as 1830, when the Rev. Hylton Wyburgh took the mastership of the pack now known as the West Cumberland.

Otter-hunters began to discard the spear eighty years ago: it had been laid aside by Mr. Bulteel and his followers in Devonshire in 1839, in obedience to the feeling that it was not sportsmanlike. By degrees other hunts adopted the same view: in some cases the followers of a pack renounced their spears and left these weapons to the Master and Huntsman, who reserved use of them until hounds held the otter, when he was killed to prevent unnecessary injury to the pack—for the otter's teeth are strong and his bite may disable.

Mr. Grantley Berkeley enjoyed some otter-hunting in the New Forest during the 'fifties and 'sixties: this is his account of a run which ended in a fair kill:—

'The next morning Mr. Radcliffe informed me that his man had tracked three otters, side by side, over some mud, going up stream in the direction of my draw of the day, asserting that no seal of the otter had been there impressed before. I thought this news too good: one otter would have done; but my host declared he could trust to the truth of the report, and we sallied forth in joyful expectation. I was drawing a sort of back-water adjoining a cover, and, observing both hounds and terriers were busy, I gave the word "to look out, for we were about to find." I had sent on my groom, Thomas Newman, to a shallow some distance off to watch it, when, having hardly said that we were about to find, I heard the most extraordinary noise proceeding from my groom and his

vicinity that could be imagined. The cause of it I give in his own words. He said " he heard me call out that we were about to find, and at the same moment Smike, followed at some distance by a single hound, came running down the side of the stream, evidently on a drag directly towards him." About fifty yards from where he stood, and about four or five paces from the edge of the water, in a swampy spot in the meadow, was a small mass of tangled reeds, briars and bushes, perhaps twenty yards in circumference, or not so much. Right into this little thicket Smike's drag took him, and, to my groom's amazement, out on the grass rolled three otters and Smike all fighting, Smike yelling with fury and pain at the treatment he met with, and the young or three-parts grown otter, whom he had fixed on, screaming in concert, to all of which Newman added his view-halloo and whoop. The row had not lasted a second when hand over hand raced up the old hound, and with a rush knocked Smike and the three otters into the water, but seizing and assisting to kill the one Smike maintained his hold on. Having worried the first otter, I took up the chase of the other two, finding them both, and changing from one to the other occasionally, but at last settling to the old bitch otter. Than the work she cut out for us, I never saw anything more beautiful. About the water meadows there are several streams or rather one stream divided into several; one of these, a very swift but shallow one, ran by the side of a bank, on which was a " plashed " and double-laid blackthorn hedge, and up this stream the otter took her course, with scarce water enough at times to hide her. When the water shoaled too much she crept into the hedge, in which alone the terriers could follow her, and then it was perfect to see the hounds splashing up the water as, gazing into the hedge, they endeavoured to head and nick in upon the otter. When the hounds dashed on to the top of the blackthorns down the otter went again into the stream, and so on till other streams and deeper water were for a time regained. The chase with this old otter, hard at it, lasted an hour and three-quarters, in as

Otter-hunting :
Hounds Marking at a Holt

hot and sunny a day in summer as needs be; and when the pack fairly hunted her down, forced her out of the water, and caught and killed her in a thick hedge, I was nearly run to a stand-still.'

In the 'sixties the propriety of using the spear under any circumstances was challenged, with the result that it was discarded altogether. There are not now hunting many men who have seen a spear used. Few sports have gained so much in popularity as otter-hunting during recent years. In 1892 there were fifteen packs in existence: there are now twenty-three; and perhaps it is safe to assert that where ten followed otter-hounds twenty years ago, thirty follow now. There was a time, not so long gone, when an intending follower of otter-hounds, anxious to be correctly turned out, received in reply to his inquiry, 'What is the uniform of your hunt?' the eloquent postcard 'Rags' from the M.O.H. Nowadays each hunt has its distinctive uniform, neat and workmanlike.

COACHING

THE many boons conferred by Mr. John Palmer upon his generation faded before the advance of the railways; but he has deserved well of posterity, if only for that he altered the coach team from three horses to four. Until that enterprising man undertook to demonstrate that the coach could carry letters more rapidly and safely than could the post-boy, our ancestors had been content with the unicorn team; but after Palmer had astonished the world by making the journey from Bath to London, in 1784, at a rate of nearly seven miles an hour, the team of four horses gradually but steadily supplanted that of three in the stages on almost every road in the country.

It is generally assumed that fast coaching only came into existence after the macadamisation of the roads; but this is not quite the case. Under favourable conditions the speed attained in pre-Macadam days was nearly as great as it became later. The *Sporting Magazine* of June 1807 says: 'Lately one of the stage coaches on the North road ran from London to Stamford, a distance of 90 miles, in 9 hrs. 4 mins. The passengers, four in number, breakfasted and dined on the road, so it must have run at the rate of 12 miles an hour all the time it was travelling.'

The 'old heavies' discarded under Palmer's drastic rule worked out their lives as ordinary stage coaches, and some of these remained on the road until well on in the nineteenth century.

Nimrod's description of the old-time coachman is worth giving:—

'The old-fashioned coachman to a heavy coach—and they

were all heavy down to very recent times—bore some analogy with the prize-fighter, for he stood highest who could hit hardest. He was generally a man of large frame, made larger by indulgence, and of great bodily power—which was useful to him. To the button-hole of his coat were appended several whipcord points, which he was sure to have occasion for on the road, for his horses were whipped till whipping was as necessary to them as their harness. In fair play to him, however, he was not solely answerable for this: the spirit of his cattle was broken by the task they were called to perform—for in those days twenty-mile stages were in fashion—and what was the consequence? Why, the four-horse whip and the Nottingham whipcord were of no avail over the latter part of the ground, and something like a cat-o'-nine-tails was produced out of the boot, which was jocularly called "the apprentice"; and a shrewd apprentice it was to the art of torturing which was inflicted on the wheelers without stint or measure, but without which the coach might have been often left on the road. One circumstance alone saved these horses from destruction; this was the frequency of ale-houses on the road, not one of which could then be passed without a call.

'Still, our old-fashioned coachman was a scientific man in his calling—more so, perhaps, than by far the greater part of his brethren of the present day, inasmuch as his energies and skill were more frequently put to the test. He had heavy loads, bad roads, and weary horses to deal with, neither was any part of his harness to be depended on, upon a pinch. Then the box he sat upon was worse than Pandora's, with all the evils it contained, for even hope appeared to have deserted it. It rested on the bed of the axletree, and shook the frame to atoms; but when prayers were put up to have it altered, the proprietors said, "No; the rascal will always be asleep if we place his box on the springs." If among all these difficulties, then, he, by degrees, became a drunkard, who can wonder at his becoming so? But he was a *coachman*. He could fetch the last ounce out of a wheel-horse by the use of

his double thong or his "apprentice," and the point of his lash told terribly upon his leaders. He likewise applied it scientifically; it was directed under the bar to the flank, and after the third hit he brought it up to his hand by *the draw*, so that it never got entangled in the pole-chains, or in any part of the harness. He could untie a knot with his teeth and tie another with his tongue, as well as he could with his hands; and if his thong broke off in the middle, he could splice it with dexterity and even with neatness as his coach was proceeding on its journey. In short, he could do what coachmen of the present day cannot do, because they have not been called upon to do it; and he likewise could do what they never try to do—namely, he could drive when he was drunk nearly as well as when he was sober. He was very frequently a faithful servant to his employers; considered trustworthy by bankers and others in the country through which he passed; and as humane to his horses, perhaps, as the adverse circumstances he was placed in by his masters would admit.'

Time has dealt kindly with the reputation of the old stage coachman, and popular tradition holds him, as Nimrod portrayed him, a whip of unrivalled skill. That there were such men is perfectly true;[1] but not every stage coachman was an expert: not all were skilful or even careful, and not all were civil: and if, as Nimrod says, they could drive as well when drunk as when sober, the cold light of contemporary record shows that there was ample room for improvement. Take the following:—On the 18th May 1808 the coachman of the Portsmouth coach to London was intoxicated, and "when he came to the foot of the hill on Wimbledon Common, instead of keeping straight on, turned to left, and found himself in Putney Lane, where, turning the corner of Mr. Kensington's wall in order to get again into the road at Wandsworth, the coach was overturned." He appears to have driven on to the bank by the roadside. The ten outside passengers were all more or less hurt, one dying from her injuries, and the coach-

[1] Robert Poynter drove the Lewes stage for thirty years without an accident.

man himself had both legs broken. Accidents due to reckless driving and racing were very common, despite the law [1] of 1790 which made a coachman who, by furious driving or careless, overturned his coach, liable to a fine not over five pounds. The following is typical :—

'Last night occurred one of those dreadful catastrophes, the result of driving opposition coaches, which has so stunned the country with horror that sober people for a time will not hazard their lives in these vehicles of fury and madness.

'Two coaches that run daily from Hinckley to Leicester had set out together. The first having descended the hill leading to Leicester was obliged to stop to repair the harness. The other coachman saw the accident and seized the moment to give his antagonist the *go by*, flogging the horses into a gallop down the hill. The horses contrived to keep on their legs, but took fright at something on the road, and became so unmanageable in the hands of a drunken coachman, that in their sweep to avoid the object of their alarm, the driver could not recover them so as to clear the post of the turnpike gate at the bottom of the hill. The velocity was so great that the coach was split in two ; three persons were dashed to pieces and instantly killed, two others survived but a few hours in the greatest agony ; four were conveyed away for surgical aid with fractured limbs, and two in the dickey were thrown with that part of the coach to a considerable distance, and not much hurt as they fell on a hedge. The coachman fell a victim to his fury and madness. It is time the Magistrates put a stop to these outrageous proceedings that have existed too long in this part of the country' (*St. James's Chronicle*, 15th July 1815).

The frequency of upsets is suggested by a letter which appeared in the papers in 1785. The writer, who signs himself 'A Sufferer,' begs coach proprietors to direct their servants, when the coach has been overturned, 'not to drag the passengers out at the window, but to replace the coach on its

[1] 30 Geo. III., c. 36.

wheels first, provided it can be accomplished with the strength they have with them.'

After coaches began to carry the mails, accidents grew more numerous. We can trace many to the greater speed maintained, others to defective workmanship which resulted in broken axles or lost wheels, many to top-heaviness, and not a few to carelessness. The short stage drivers, on the whole, were the worst offenders. For sheer recklessness this would be hard to beat :—

'During the dense fog of Wednesday last, as a Woolwich coach full of inside and outside passengers was driving at a furious rate, just after it had passed the Six Bells on its way to town, the coachman ran against a heavy country cart. The stage was upset, and those on the roof were pitched violently against an empty coal waggon ; two of them fell on the shafts, one of whom had a shoulder badly dislocated ; the other had his jawbone broken, with the loss of his front teeth. A Greenwich pensioner, with a wooden leg, had an arm broken, and some contusions on the head' (*Bell's Life*, 15th December 1822).

It would be easy to compile a list of accidents due to causes unforeseen, each one illustrating a different danger of the road. Here are a few :—

'Tuesday afternoon, as one of the Brighton stages was leaving London at a rapid pace, the pole broke in Lambeth, and the coach was upset. Several passengers had limbs broken and others were injured' (*Bell's Life*, 25th August 1822).

'A fatal accident befel the Woolwich Tally Ho opposition stage on Tuesday. Coming down the hill from the Green Man the horses became restive, the coachman lost his command, and immediately the whole set off at full speed. In turning a corner the coach upset, being heavily laden outside. Out of sixteen persons only one escaped without a leg or arm broken, and four are not expected to survive. The coach was literally dashed to pieces. The inside passengers were more lacerated than those outside, owing to the coach being

shattered to pieces and their being dragged along the road for fifty yards. But little hopes are entertained of a Major M'Leod—a very fine young man ; not a vestige of his face is left except his eyes ' (*Bell's Life*, 22nd September 1822).

' A fatal accident happened to Gamble, coachman of the Yeovil mail, on Wednesday, caused by the leaders shying at an old oak tree. The coachman was killed on the spot, and the guard escaped with bruises. The horses started off and galloped into Andover at the rate of 20 miles an hour. The single inside passenger was not aware of anything amiss until two gentlemen, who saw the horses going at a furious rate without a driver, succeeded in stopping them just as they were turning into the George gateway ' (*Times*, 21st February 1838).

Coachmen and guards were apt to leave too much to the honour of the horses when stopping, and it was not at all uncommon for the team to start on its journey with nobody on the box. An old coachman told Lord Algernon St. Maur that on one night's drive he met two coaches without any driver ! In 1806 (46 Geo. III., c. 36) it was made an offence punishable by fine to leave the team without a proper person in charge while the coach stopped.

Organised races between public coaches were very popular : the coachmen did not spare the horses on these occasions. This race took place in 1808 :—

' On Sunday, August 7th, a coach called the " Patriot," belonging to the master of the " Bell," Leicester, drawn by four horses, started against another coach called the " Defiance," from Leicester to Nottingham, a distance of 26 miles, both coaches changing horses at Loughborough. Thousands of people from all parts assembled to witness the event, and bets to a considerable amount were depending. Both coaches started exactly at 8 o'clock, and after the severest contest ever remembered, the " Patriot " arrived at Nottingham first by two minutes only, performing the distance of 26 miles in 2 hrs. 10 mins., carrying twelve passengers.'

Mishaps were so frequent and productive of so many

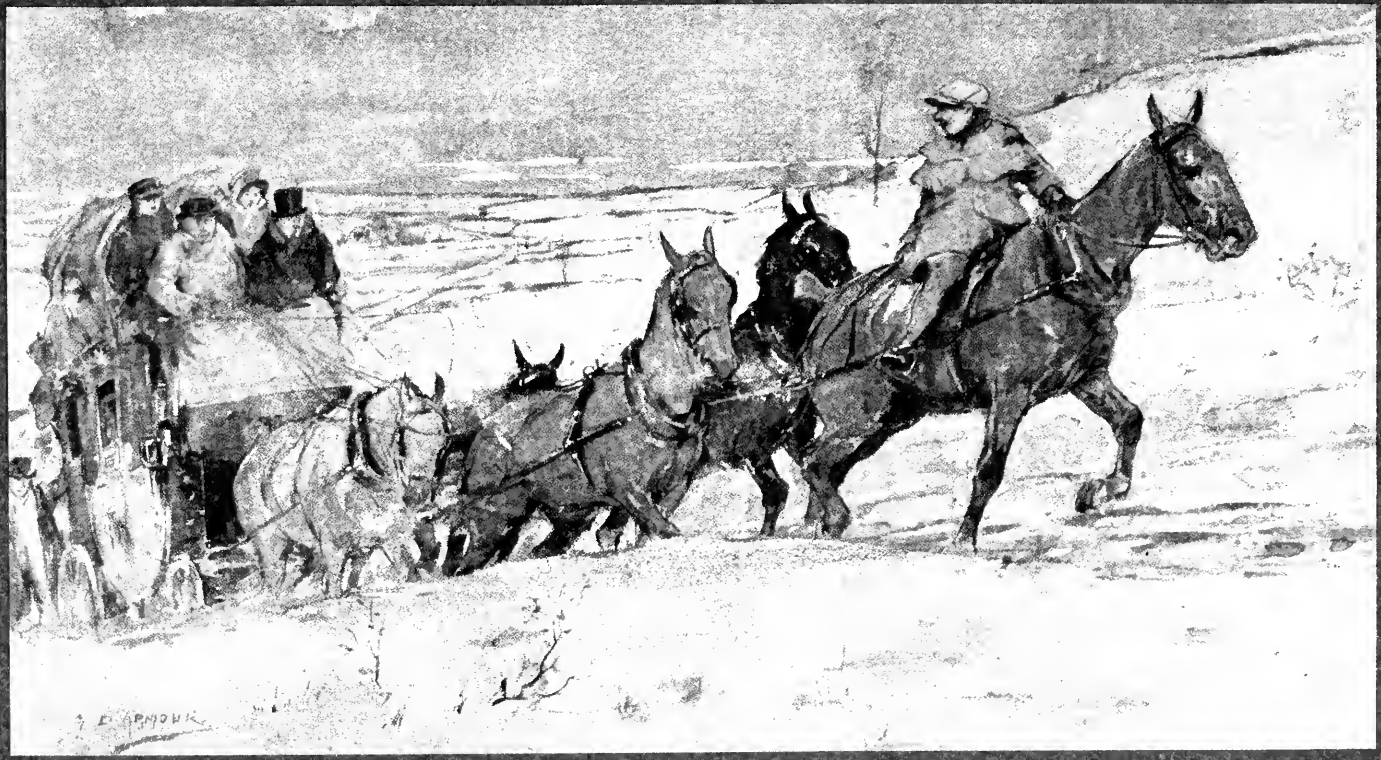
fatalities, to say nothing of broken limbs, that at last general outcry arose for more stringent repressive measures: and in 1820 a law (1 Geo. IV., c. 4) was passed, making coachmen who might be guilty of 'wanton or furious driving or racing' liable to imprisonment as well as to fine, even though their proceedings were not brought to a close by overturning the coach. The new law did not make an end of accidents: on the whole there were fewer as the result of racing, but the records of the time bear ample witness to lack of ordinary caution.

For many years Macadam and Telford had been devoting their ingenuity to the task of solving the secret of road-making; it was not until 1818 that the Macadam system was finally approved and adopted. Then the work of remaking the roads of the kingdom was taken in hand, and the new highways, when constructed, ushered in the brief 'golden age' of coaching—say 1825 to 1838, the mails having been transferred to the railways in the latter year.

Nimrod's famous essay, written in 1835, shows in convincing fashion the difference between coaching in the olden days and at its best:—

'May we be permitted, since we have mentioned the *Arabian Nights*, to make a little demand on our readers' fancy, and suppose it possible that a worthy old gentleman of this said year—1742—had fallen comfortably asleep *à la Dodswell*, and never awoke till Monday morning in Piccadilly? "What coach, your honour?" says a ruffianly-looking fellow, much like what he might have been had he lived a hundred years back. "I wish to go home to Exeter," replies the old gentleman mildly. "Just in time, your honour, here she comes—them there grey horses; where 's your luggage?" "Don't be in a hurry," observes the stranger; "that 's a gentleman's carriage." "It ain't! I tell you," says the cad; "it 's the Comet, and you must be as quick as lightning." *Nolens volens*, the remonstrating old gentleman is shoved into the Comet, by a cad at each elbow, having been three times assured

The Stage Coach :
Old Times



his luggage is in the hind boot, and twice three times denied having ocular demonstration of the fact.

'However, he is now seated; and "What *gentleman* is going to drive us?" is his first question to his fellow-passengers. "He is no gentleman, sir," says a person who sits opposite to him, and who happens to be a proprietor of the coach. "He has been on the Comet ever since she started, and is a very steady young man." "Pardon my ignorance," replies the regenerated; "from the cleanliness of his person, the neatness of his apparel, and the language he made use of, I mistook him for some enthusiastic bachelor of arts, wishing to become a charioteer after the manner of the illustrious ancients."[1] "You must have been long in foreign parts, sir," observes the proprietor. In five minutes, or less, after this parley commenced, the wheels went round, and in another five the coach arrived at Hyde Park gate; but long before it got there, the worthy gentleman of 1742 (set down by his fellow-travellers for either a little cracked or an emigrant from the backwoods of America) exclaimed, "What! off the stones already?" "You have never been on the stones," observes his neighbour on his right; "no stones in London now, sir."[2]

'In five minutes under the hour the Comet arrives at Hounslow, to the great delight of our friend, who by this time waxed hungry, not having broken his fast before starting. "Just fifty-five minutes and thirty-seven seconds," says he, "from the time we left London!—wonderful travelling,

[1] The old gentleman's conjecture was not far wrong. At this time, 1835, it is true fewer men of good birth occupied the box than had been the case a few years before—if we rightly interpret Nimrod's own remarks on the point. When the box had been set on springs or made an integral part of the coach-body, when the roads had been made worthy of the name and fast work the rule, coach-driving became popular among men of social position. Some drove for pleasure, horsing the coaches themselves, others took up driving as a profession and made good incomes thereby. These gentlemen coachmen did much to raise the standard of conduct among the professionals of humble origin. Lord Algernon St. Maur (*Driving*, Badminton Library) says that Mr. Stevenson, who was driving the Brighton Age in 1830, was 'the great reformer who set a good example as regards punctuality, neatness, and sobriety.'

[2] Until Macadam was adopted the streets in London were cobbled or paved.

gentlemen, to be sure, but much too fast to be safe. However, thank Heaven, we are arrived at a good-looking house; and now, *waiter*, I hope you have got breakf——" Before the last syllable, however, of the word could be pronounced, the worthy old gentleman's head struck the back of the coach by a jerk, which he could not account for (the fact was, three of the four fresh horses were bolters), and the waiter, the inn, and indeed Hounslow itself (*terraeque urbesque recedunt*) disappeared in the twinkling of an eye. Never did such a succession of doors, windows, and window-shutters pass so quickly in his review before—and he hoped they might never do so again. Recovering, however, a little from his surprise—"My dear sir," said he, "you told me we were to change horses at Hounslow? Surely they are not so inhuman as to drive these poor animals another stage at this unmerciful rate!" "Change horses, sir!" says the proprietor; "why, we changed them whilst you were putting on your spectacles, and looking at your watch. Only one minute allowed for it at Hounslow, and it is often done in fifty seconds by those nimble-fingered horse-keepers." "You astonish me—but really I do not like to go so fast." "Oh, sir! we always spring them over these six miles. It is what we call *the hospital ground.*" This alarming phrase is presently interpreted: it intimates that horses whose "backs are getting down instead of up in their work"—some "that won't hold an ounce down hill, or draw an ounce up"—others "that kick over the pole one day and over the bars the next"—in short, all the reprobates, styled in the road slang *bo-kickers*, are sent to work these six miles, because *here* they have nothing to do but gallop—not a pebble as big as a nutmeg on the road; and so even, that it would not disturb the equilibrium of a spirit-level.

'The coach, however, goes faster and faster over the *hospital ground*, as the bo-kickers feel their legs, and the collars get warm to their shoulders; and having ten outsides, the luggage of the said ten, and a few extra packages besides on the roof, she rolls rather more than is pleasant, although the centre

Mail Coaches Racing:
Something Wrong with the
Opposition Coach

Y D'AMOUR

of gravity is pretty well kept down by four not slender insides, two well-laden boots, and three huge trunks in the slide. The gentleman of the last century, however, becomes alarmed—is sure the horses are running away with the coach—declares he perceives by the shadow that there is nobody on the box, and can see the reins dangling about the horses' heels. He attempts to look out of the window, but his fellow-traveller dissuades him from doing so: "You may get a shot in your eye from the wheel. Keep your head in the coach, it 's all right, depend on 't. We always spring 'em over this stage." Persuasion is useless; for the horses increase their speed, and the worthy old gentleman looks out. But what does he see? Death and destruction before his eyes? No: to his surprise he finds the coachman firm at his post, and in the act of taking a pinch of snuff from the gentleman who sits beside him on the *bench*, his horses going at the rate of a mile in three minutes at the time. "But suppose anything should break, or a linchpin should give way and let a wheel loose?" is the next appeal to the communicative but not very consoling proprietor. "Nothing *can* break, sir," is the reply; "all of the very best stuff; axletrees of the best K.Q. iron, faggotted edgeways, well bedded in the timbers; and as for linchpins, we have not one about the coach. We use the best patent boxes that are manufactured. In short, sir, you are as safe in it as if you were in your bed." "Bless me," exclaims the old man, "what improvements! And the roads!!!" "They are at perfection, sir," says the proprietor. "No horse walks a yard in this coach between London and Exeter—all trotting ground now." "A little *galloping* ground, I fear," whispers the senior to himself! "But who has effected all this improvement in your paving?" "An American of the name of Macadam," [1] was the reply, "but coachmen call him the Colossus of Roads. Great things have likewise been done in

[1] John Loudon Macadam was a Scotsman by birth. In 1770, when fourteen years old, he was sent to the care of an uncle in New York, whence he did not return till he was twenty-six years of age; hence the mistake in describing him as 'an American.'

cutting through hills and altering the course of roads: and it is no uncommon thing now-a-days to see four horses trotting away merrily down hill on that very ground where they formerly were seen walking up hill."

'"And pray, my good sir, what sort of horses may you have over the next stage?" "Oh, sir, no more bo-kickers. It is hilly and severe ground, and requires cattle strong and staid. You 'll see four as fine horses put to the coach at Staines as you ever saw in a nobleman's carriage in your life." "Then we shall have no more galloping—no more springing them, as you term it?" "Not quite so fast over the next ground," replied the proprietor; "but he will make good play over some part of it: for example, when he gets three parts down a hill he lets them loose, and cheats them out of half the one they have to ascend from the bottom of it. In short, they are halfway up it before a horse touches his collar; and we *must* take every advantage with such a fast coach as this, and one that loads so well, or we should never keep our time. We are now to a minute; in fact, the country people no longer look at the *sun* when they want to set their clocks—they look only to the *Comet*. But, depend upon it you are quite safe; we have nothing but first-rate artists on this coach." "Artist! artist!" grumbles the old gentleman, "we had no such term as that."

'"I should like to see this *artist* change horses at the next stage," resumes our ancient; "for at the last it had the appearance of magic—'Presto, Jack, and begone!'" "By all means; you will be much gratified. It is done with a quickness and ease almost incredible to any one who has only read or heard of it; not a buckle nor a rein is touched twice, and still all is made secure; but use becomes second nature with us. Even in *my* younger days it was always half an hour's work—sometimes more. There was—'Now, ladies and gentlemen, what would you like to take? There 's plenty of time, while the horses are changing, for tea, coffee, or supper; and the coachman will wait for you—won't you, Mr. Smith?'

Then Mr. Smith himself was in no hurry ; he had a lamb about his coach for one butcher in the town, and perhaps half a calf for another, a barrel of oysters for the lawyer, and a basket of game for the parson, *all on his own account.* In short, the best wheel of the coach was his, and he could not be otherwise than accommodating."

'The coach arrives at Staines, and the ancient gentleman puts his intentions into effect, though he was near being again too late ; for by the time he could extract his hat from the netting that suspended it over his head, the leaders had been taken from their bars, and were walking up the yard towards their stables. On perceiving a fine thorough-bred horse led towards the coach with a twitch fastened tightly to his nose, he exclaims, "Holloa, Mr. Horse-keeper ! You are going to put an unruly horse in the coach." "What ! this here 'oss ?" growls the man ; "the quietest hanimal alive, sir !" as he shoves him to the near side of the pole. At this moment, however, the coachman is heard to say in somewhat of an undertone, "Mind what you are about, Bob ; don't let him touch the roller-bolt." In thirty seconds more they are off—"the staid and steady team," so styled by the proprietor in the coach. "LET 'EM GO ! and take care of yourselves," says the artist, so soon as he is firmly seated upon his box ; and this is the way they start. The near leader rears right on end ; and if the rein had not been yielded to him at the instant, he would have fallen backwards on the head of the pole. The moment the twitch was taken from the nose of the thorough-bred near-wheeler, he drew himself back to the extent of his pole-chain—his forelegs stretched out before him—and then, like a lion loosened from his toil, made a snatch at the coach that would have broken two pairs of traces of 1742. A steady and good-whipped horse, however, his partner, started the coach himself, with a gentle touch of the thong, and away they went off together. But the thorough-bred one was very far from being comfortable ; it was in vain that the coachman tried to soothe him with his voice, or stroked him with the crop

of his whip. He drew three parts of the coach, and cantered for the first mile, and when he did settle down to his trot, his snorting could be heard by the passengers, being as much as to say, "I was not born to be a slave." In fact, as the proprietor now observed, "he had been a fair plate horse in his time, but his temper was always queer."

'After the first shock was over, the Conservative of the eighteenth century felt comfortable. The pace was considerably slower than it had been over the last stage, but he was unconscious of the reason for its being diminished. It was to accommodate the queer temper of the race-horse,[1] who, if he had not been humoured at starting, would never have settled down to his trot, but have ruffled all the rest of the team. He was also surprised, if not pleased, at the quick rate at which they were ascending hills which, in his time, he should have been asked by the coachman to have walked up—but his pleasure was short-lived; the third hill they descended produced a return of his agony. This was what is termed on the road a long fall of ground, and the coach rather pressed upon the horses. The temper of the race-horse became exhausted; breaking into a canter, he was of little use as a wheeler, and there was then nothing for it but a gallop. The leaders only wanted the signal; and the point of the thong being thrown lightly over their backs, they were off like an arrow out of a bow: but the rocking of the coach was awful, and more particularly so to the passengers on the roof. Nevertheless, she was not in danger: the master-hand of the artist kept her in a direct line; and meeting the opposing ground, she steadied, and all was right. The newly-awakened gentleman, however, begins to grumble again. "Pray, my good sir," says he anxiously, "do use your authority over your coachman, and *insist* upon his putting the drag-chain on the wheel when

[1] It was not unusual for retired race-horses to end their days 'on the road.' A notable instance is that of Mendoza by Javelin. Mendoza won eight races at Newmarket in his three seasons on the turf, 1791-2-3; then the Duke of Leeds bought him as a hunter; and after a few seasons with hounds he made one of a team in the Catterick and Greta Bridge mail-coach. Mendoza was still at work in 1807, but had become blind.

Coaching :

An Amateur Driver in Days of the 'Whip Club'

G. D. ARMOUR

descending the next hill." "I have no such authority," replies the proprietor. "It is true, we are now drawn by my horses, but I cannot interfere with the driving of them." "But is he not your servant?" "He is, sir; but I contract to work the coach so many miles in so many hours, and he engages to drive it, and each is subject to a fine if the time be not kept on the road. On so fast a coach as this every advantage must be taken; and if we were to drag down such hills as these, we should never reach Exeter to-day."

'Our friend, however, will have no more of it. He quits the coach at Bagshot, congratulating himself on the safety of his limbs. Yet he takes one more peep at the change, which is done with the same despatch as before; three greys and a pie-ball replacing three chestnuts and a bay—the harness beautifully clean, and the ornaments bright as the sun. Not a word is spoken by the passengers, who merely look their admiration; but the laconic address of the coachman is not lost on the by-standers. "Put the bay mare near wheel this evening, and the stallion *up to the cheek*," said he to his horse-keeper as he placed his right foot on the roller-bolt—*i.e.* the last step but one to the box. "How is Paddy's leg?" It 's all right, sir," replied the horse-keeper. "Let 'em go, then," quoth the *artist*, "and take care of yourselves."

'The worthy old gentleman is now shown into a room, and after warming his hands at the fire, rings the bell for the waiter. A well-dressed person appears, whom he of course takes for the landlord. "Pray, sir," says he, "have you any *slow* coach down this road to-day?" "Why, yes, sir," replies John; "we shall have the Regulator down in an hour." "Just right," said our friend; "it will enable me to break my fast, which I have not done to-day." "Oh, sir," observes John, "these here fast *drags* be the ruin of us. 'Tis all hurry scurry, and no gentleman has time to have nothing on the road. What will you take, sir? Mutton-chops, veal-cutlets, beef-steaks, or a fowl (to kill)?"

'At the appointed time, the Regulator appears at the door.

It is a strong, well-built drag, painted what is called chocolate colour, bedaubed all over with gilt letters—a bull's head on the doors, a Saracen's head on the hind boot, and drawn by four strapping horses; but it wants the neatness of the other. The passengers may be, by a shade or two, of a lower order than those who had gone forward with the Comet; nor, perhaps, is the coachman quite so refined as the one we have just taken leave of. He has not the neat white hat, the clean doeskin gloves, the well-cut trousers, and dapper frock; but still his appearance is respectable, and perhaps, in the eyes of many, more in character with his calling. Neither has he the agility of the artist on the Comet, for he is nearly double his size; but he is a strong powerful man, and might be called a pattern card of the heavy coachman of the present day—in other words, of a man who drives a coach which carries sixteen passengers instead of fourteen, and is rated at eight miles an hour instead of ten. "What room in the Regulator?" says our friend to the waiter, as he comes to announce its arrival. "Full inside, sir, and in front; but you 'll have the gammon board all to yourself, and your luggage is in the hind boot." "Gammon board! Pray, what 's that? Do you not mean the basket?"[1] "Oh no, sir," says John, smiling; "no such thing on the road now. It is the hind-dickey, as some call it; where you 'll be as comfortable as possible, and can sit with your back or your face to the coach, or *both*, if you like." "Ah, ah," continues the old gentleman; "something new again, I presume." However, the mystery is cleared up; the ladder is reared to the hind wheel, and the gentleman safely seated on the gammon board.

Before ascending to his place, our friend has cast his eye on the team that is about to convey him to Hartford Bridge, the next stage on the great western road, and he perceives it to be of a different stamp from that which he had seen taken from the coach at Bagshot. It consisted of four moderate-

[1] The early coaches were equipped with a huge basket slung over the hind axle wherein passengers were carried at lower fares.

sized horses, full of power, and still fuller of condition, but with a fair sprinkling of blood; in short, the eye of a judge would have discovered something about them not very unlike galloping. "All right!" cried the guard, taking his key-bugle[1] in his hand; and they proceeded up the village, at a steady pace, to the tune of "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," and continued at that pace for the first five miles. "*I am landed*," thinks our friend to himself. Unluckily, however, for the humane and cautious old gentleman, even the Regulator was about to show tricks. Although what now is called a slow coach, she is timed at eight miles in the hour through a great extent of country, and must, of course, make play where she can, being strongly opposed by hills lower down the country, trifling as these hills are, no doubt, to what they once were. The Regulator, moreover, loads well, not only with passengers, but with luggage; and the last five miles of this stage, called the Bridge Flat, have the reputation of being the best five miles for a coach to be found at this time in England. The ground is firm; the surface undulating, and therefore favourable to draught; always dry, not a shrub being near it; nor is there a stone upon it much larger than a marble. These advantages, then, are not lost to the Regulator, or made use of without sore discomposure to the solitary tenant of her gammon board.

'Any one that has looked into books will very readily account for the lateral motion, or rocking, as it is termed, of a coach, being greatest at the greatest distance from the horses (as the tail of a paper kite is in motion whilst the body remains at rest); and more especially when laden as this coach was —the greater part of the weight being forward. The situation of our friend, then, was once more deplorable. The Regulator takes but twenty-three minutes for these celebrated five miles, which cannot be done without "springing the cattle" now and then; and it was in one of the very best of their gallops of that

[1] Only the mail-coach guard carried a horn; stage-coach guards used the key-bugle, and some were very clever performers on it.

day, that they were met by the coachman of the Comet, who was returning with his up-coach. When coming out of rival yards, coachmen never fail to cast an eye to the loading of their opponents on the road, and now that of the natty artist of the Comet experienced a high treat. He had a full view of his quondam passenger, and thus described his situation.

'He was seated with his back to the horses—his teeth set grim as death—his eyes cast down towards the ground, thinking the less he saw of his danger the better. There was what is called a top-heavy load—perhaps a ton of luggage on the roof, and, it may be, not *quite* in obedience to the Act of Parliament standard.[1] There were also two horses at wheel, whose strides were of rather unequal length, and this operated powerfully on the coach. In short, the lurches of the Regulator were awful at the moment of the Comet meeting her. A tyro in mechanics would have exclaimed, "The centre of gravity must be lost, the centrifugal force will have the better of it—*over she must go!*"

'The centre of gravity having been preserved, the coach arrived safe at Hartford Bridge; but the old gentleman has again had enough of it. "I will walk into Devonshire," said he, as he descended from his perilous exaltation. "What did that rascally waiter mean by telling me this was a slow coach? and moreover, look at the luggage on the roof!" "Only regulation height, sir," says the coachman; "we aren't allowed to have it an inch higher; sorry we can't please you, sir, but we will try and make room for you in front." "*Fronti nulla fides*," mutters the worthy to himself, as he walks tremblingly into the house—adding, "I shall not give this fellow a shilling; he is dangerous."

'The Regulator being off, the waiter is again applied to. "What do you charge per mile posting?" "One and sixpence, sir." "Bless me! just double! Let me see—two

[1] 50 Geo. III., c. 48 came into operation in 1810. This enacted that on a four-horse coach baggage might be piled to a height of 2 feet. To encourage low-hung coaches this law allowed baggage to be piled to a height of 10 ft. 9 in. *from the ground.*

hundred miles, at two shillings per mile, postboys, turnpikes, etc., £20. This will never do. Have you no coach that does not carry luggage on the top?" "Oh yes, sir," replies the waiter, "we shall have one to-night that is not allowed to carry a band-box on the roof."[1] "That 's the coach for me; pray what do you call it?" "The Quicksilver mail, sir; one of the best out of London—Jack White and Tom Brown, picked coachmen, over this ground—Jack White down to-night." "Guarded and lighted?" "Both, sir; blunderbuss and pistols in the sword-case;[2] a lamp each side the coach, and one under the foot-board—see to pick up a pin the darkest night of the year." "Very fast?" "Oh no, sir, *just keeps time, and that's all.*" "That 's the coach for me, then," repeats our hero; "and I am sure I shall feel at my ease in it. I suppose it is what used to be called the Old Mercury."

'Unfortunately, the Devonport (commonly called the Quicksilver) mail is half a mile in the hour faster than most in England, and is, indeed, one of the miracles of the road. Let us, then, picture to ourselves our anti-reformer snugly seated in this mail, on a pitch-dark night in November. It is true she has no luggage on the roof, nor much to incommode her elsewhere; but she is a mile in the hour faster than the Comet, at least three miles quicker than the Regulator; and she

[1] The conveyance of 'trunks, parcels, and other packages' on the roof of a mail-coach was prohibited in the Postmaster-General's circular to mail contractors of 29th June 1807. As the mails increased it became impossible to enforce this regulation, and the bags were carried wherever they could be stowed. 'The Druid' says of the Edinburgh mail-coach: 'The heaviest night as regards correspondence was when the American mail had come in. On those occasions the bags have been known to weigh above 16 cwt. They were contained in sacks seven feet long and were laid in three tiers across the top, so high that no guard unless he were a Chang in stature could look over them . . . and the waist (the seat behind the coachman) and the hind boot were filled as well.'

[2] It must be remembered that the old gentleman speaks by the light of his knowledge of nearly a century earlier, when highway robbery was very common, and it was not usual for coaches to run at night. At the period to which Nimrod refers highwaymen had not entirely disappeared from the roads (William Rea was hanged for this offence, 4th July 1828), and not every stage-coach carried a guard. Mail-coaches, all of which carried guards, were, of course, unknown to Nimrod's old gentleman.

performs more than half her journey by lamplight. It is needless to say, then, our senior soon finds out his mistake; but there is no remedy at hand, for it is the dead of the night, and all the inns are shut up. He must proceed, or be left behind in a stable. The climax of his misfortunes then approaches.

'Nature being exhausted, sleep comes to his aid, and he awakes on a stage which is called the fastest on the journey—four miles of ground, and twelve minutes the time! The old gentleman starts from his seat, having dreamed the horses were running away with the coach, and so, no doubt, they might be. He is determined to convince himself of the fact, though the passengers assure him "all 's right." "Don't put your head out of the window," says one of them, "you will lose your hat to a certainty": but advice is seldom listened to by a terrified man, and next moment a stentorian voice is heard, crying, "Stop, coachman, stop—I have lost my hat and wig!" The coachman hears him not—and in another second the broad wheels of a road waggon have for ever demolished the lost head-gear.'

That was the Road at its best: the poetic side we have in mind when we speak of the good old days of coaching. The following passages refer equally to the 'golden age'; their very baldness has an eloquence of its own. It is true that the winter of 1836-37 is conspicuous in history for the exceptionally heavy snowfall; but as Nimrod has shown coaching at its best, there is no injustice in presenting these glimpses of coach travel at its worst:—

'Tabor, guard of the Devonport, who left London with the mail on Sunday and returned on Wednesday, reports that a mile and a half from Amesbury they got completely blocked. The leaders dropped down, but rose again; the near wheel-horse fell and could not be got up. The coachman procured a pair of post horses, but they could only get the wheel horse out of the snow; it was impossible to get him on his legs. Four more post horses and four waggon horses were requisi-

tioned, and with their assistance the mail was extricated by daylight. Then they travelled with the six post horses across the Downs. They were again blocked near Mere. About a hundred men were at this time employed a little distance off in digging out the Subscription and Defiance coaches. After being extricated by some labourers they resumed their progress from Mere with four fresh mail-horses and two posters. Between Ilchester and Ilminster the post horse leaders fell in a snow drift, and were run upon by the mail leaders' (*Bell's Life*, January 1837).

'The Estafette coach from Manchester on Sunday morning did not reach London until Tuesday night, having been dug out of the snow twelve times. It was the first coach from Manchester of the same day that arrived in town. The guard attributes his success to the exertions of four sailors, outside passengers, who lent a hand at every casualty.'

'A gentleman who left Sheffield by the Hope coach ot Sunday week reports that the coach did not complete its journey until Saturday afternoon. Between Nottingham and Mansfield, close to the Forest, they came upon three coaches blocked in the snow, which was lying 9 feet deep. The Hope left Mansfield with eight horses and was driven into Nottingham with ten. They picked up a poor boy nearly perished with cold. The boy was got by a gentleman jumping down while the coach was in motion, for the coachman declared that if he came to dead stop he would not be able to get the wheels in motion again' (*Bell's Life*, 8th January 1837).

Highway robbery was still practised at this time, but the armed horseman with crape mask and pistols had gone out of fashion, and thefts were accomplished by craft.

'The Stirling mail has been robbed of notes to the value of £13,000 in the following manner,—A man took his seat at Stirling as an outside passenger. The mail was followed closely from Stirling by a gig containing two men. When the mail arrived at Kirkliston the guard stopped to take out the customary bags to leave there. The gig also stopped there,

and the two men in it went into the house. The guard had left the mail box open, in which the parcels were, and the outside passenger easily abstracted the one containing the notes. He then left the coach. The gig with the two men took the Queensferry road. The parcels were not missed until the mail reached Edinburgh. On the Queensferry Road the two men were joined by their accomplice, the outside passenger. They left the gig and took a post chaise for Edinburgh. They discharged the chaise before entering the city and gave the post-boy £3 ' (*Bell's Life*, 2nd January 1825).

Great improvements in all matters connected with coaching were made during the first two decades of the nineteenth century : these were due to the rage for driving that prevailed about this time. The King was deeply interested in coaching, was himself no mean whip, and he set the fashion. It did not last very long. Nimrod, writing in 1835, remarks that about 1825 ' thirty to forty four-in-hand equipages were constantly to be seen about town : *one* is stared at now.'

The driving clubs held ' meets ' in George the Third's time much as they do at present, but the vehicles used were ' barouche landaus,' and the drive taken was much longer than that in vogue to-day. Bedfont beyond Hounslow, and Windsor were favourite places whither the coaches—' barouche landaus '—drove in procession to dine. Very particular attention was paid to dress. This was the costume in which members of the Whip Club, founded in 1808 as a rival to the Benson, mounted their boxes on 6th June 1808 in Park Lane, to drive to Harrow :—

' A light, drab-colour cloth coat made full, single breast with three tier of pockets, the skirt reaching to the ancles ; a mother of pearl button the size of a crown piece ; waistcoat blue and yellow stripe, each stripe an inch in depth ; small clothes corded silk plush made to button over the calf of the leg, with sixteen strings and rosettes to each knee. The boots very short and finished with very broad straps which hang over the tops and down to the ancle. A hat three inches and a half

deep in the crown only, and the same depth in the brim exactly. Each wore a large bouquet at the breast, thus resembling the coachmen of our nobility who, on His Majesty's birthday, appear in that respect so peculiarly distinguished.'[1]

Grimaldi the clown, then at the zenith of his fame, burlesqued this get-up so mercilessly that a less conspicuous garb was adopted.

The fifteen barouche landaus which turned out on this occasion, driven by 'men of known skill in the science of charioteering,' were well calculated to set off the somewhat conspicuous attire of the members: they were 'Yellow-bodied carriages with whip springs and dickey boxes; cattle of a bright bay colour with silver plate ornaments on the harness and rosettes to the ears.'

The meets of the driving clubs appear to have roused a spirit of ribaldry in unregenerate youth. One day in March 1809 a young Etonian made his appearance in a low phaeton with a four-in-hand of donkeys, with which he brought up the rear of the procession as it drove round Grosvenor and Berkeley Squares.

The Driving Club was the Benson, which had been founded in 1807. Sir Henry Peyton was the last survivor of the 'noble, honourable, and respectable' drivers who composed it. Thackeray described him in the last of his papers on *The Four Georges* as he appeared driving the 'one solitary four-in-hand' to be seen in the London parks. He was then (1851) very old, and attracted attention as much by his dress, which was of the fashion of 1825, as by his then unique turn-out.

The Benson Club came to an end in 1853. The Whip

[1] This refers to the 'mail-coach parade,' which was first held in 1799 and for the last time in 1835. The coaches, to the number of about twenty-five, were either new or newly painted with the Royal Arms on the door, the stars of each of the four Orders of Knighthood on the upper panel, and the name of the town whither the coach ran on the small panel over each door. Coachmen and guards wore new uniforms and gentlemen used to lend their best teams—often also their coachmen, as appears from the passage quoted. A horseman rode behind each coach to make the procession longer. The 'meet' took place in Lincoln's Inn Fields and the coaches drove to St. James's, there turning to come back to the General Post-Office, then in Lombard Street.

Club, otherwise the Four Horse Club, came to an end in 1838. The Defiance Club, for members who had been 'lately permitted to retire' from the other two, was projected in 1809, but it does not appear to have come to anything. The Richmond Drag Club was founded in 1838, but it did not survive for many years; the members to the number of fifteen or sixteen used to meet at Lord Chesterfield's house. These were the principal clubs.

Some of the amateur whips of a century ago were addicted to coach matches. Here is the account of such a race from the *Sporting Magazine* of 1802 :—

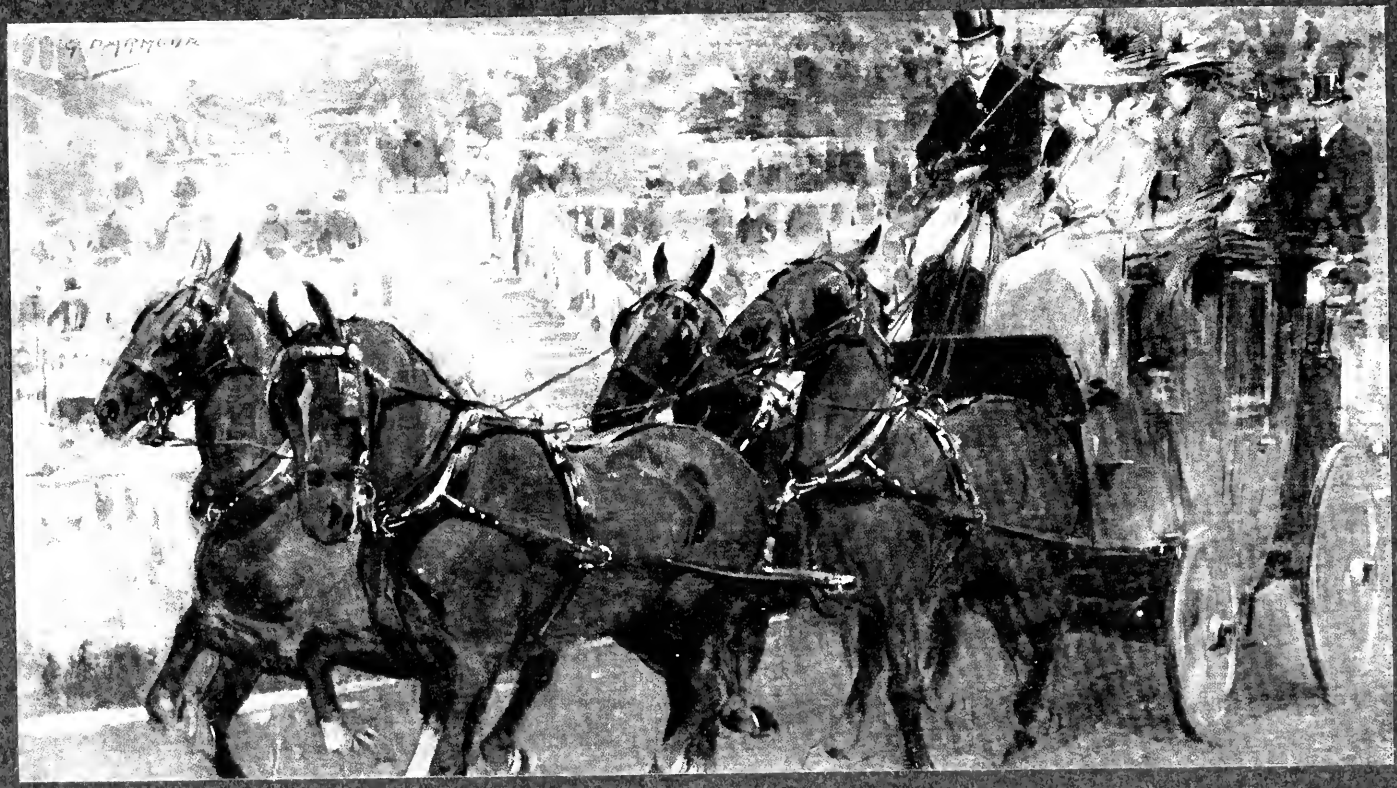
'MAIL COACH MATCH.—On Thursday, May 20th, the London Mail, horsed by Mr. Laud, of the New London Inn, Exeter, with four beautiful grey horses, and driven by Mr. Cave Browne, of the Inniskilling Dragoons, started (at the sound of the bugle) from St. Sydwell's for a bet of Five Hundred Guineas against the Plymouth Mail, horsed by Mr. Phillipps, of the Hotel, with four capital blacks, and driven by Mr. Chichester of Arlington House, which got the Mail first to the Post Office in Honiton. The bet was won easy by Mr. Browne. A very great concourse of people assembled on this occasion.'

In 1811 Mr. George Seward undertook to drive a four-in-hand fifteen miles in fifty minutes. He selected the road from Hyde Park Corner to Staines, and started at six in the morning. He failed to accomplish his undertaking, but only by three minutes twenty seconds.

There was more originality about the competition arranged in May 1805 between Mr. Charles Buxton, inventor of the bit known by his name and one of the founders of the Whip Club, and a horse-dealer :—

'One of our most celebrated whips, Charles Buxton, Esq., has concluded a bet of 500 guineas with Mr. Thomas Hall, the dealer in horses. The object of the wager is to decide which of the two is the best driver of four unruly horses. The wager is to be decided by two friends of the parties, who are to pick

Modern Coaching:
In the Show Ring



out eight horses from Spencer's, Marsden's, and White's. Lords Barrymore and Cranley are chosen as the umpires. The horses selected are only to be those which have not been broken in. The friend of each charioteer is to pick the horses alternately until the number agreed on is selected. The parties are then to mount the box and proceed to decide the wager. The bettings already are said to be considerable. Neither the scene of action nor the day when the contest is to take place are yet determined on. Mr. Buxton is said to be so certain of success that he has offered to double the bet.'

Though the law of 1820 made racing a criminal offence, the practice was one which could not be wholly put down, and on May-day the law was set at naught by popular consent, rival coaches on that day racing one another without disguise: the May-day race became an institution of the road, and seems to have been winked at by the authorities. Some wonderful records were made in these contests on the macadam. Thus, on 1st May 1830, the Independent Tally-ho ran from London to Birmingham, 109 miles, in 7 hours 39 minutes. It was not rare for a coach to perform its journey at a rate of fifteen miles an hour on May-day. We may compare this with the time made in the Leicester-Nottingham race of 1808 mentioned on p. 128.

It is seventy years since the carriage of the mails was transferred from coach to railway train, and there are yet living men who can remember the last journeys of the mail-coaches, some carrying little flags at half-mast, some displaying a miniature coffin, emblematic of the death of a great institution. Yet the mail-coach survived until a much later date in some districts, where the line was slow to penetrate. Mr. S. A. Kinglake, in *Baily's Magazine* of 1906, gave an account of the Oxford and Cheltenham coach, which only began to carry the mails in 1848, and made its last trip in 1862, when the opening of a new branch line ousted this lingerer on the roads.

The interregnum between the last of the old coaches and

the modern era was not a very long one: indeed, taking the country as a whole, and accepting the coach as subsidiary to the railway, the old and the new overlap. Modern road coaching dates from the later 'sixties, when the late Duke of Beaufort, with some others, started the Brighton coach. This was the first of several private ventures of the same kind; their primary object was to enable the owners to enjoy the pleasure of driving a team, and the financial side of the business was not much regarded. The subscription coach was a later development, with the same object in view, pleasure rather than money-making, and the large majority of the coaches which run from London to Brighton, St. Albans, Guildford, and other places within an easy day's journey are maintained by small syndicates of subscribers, who take turns on the box. American visitors patronise these vehicles extensively, and no doubt to their support may be traced Mr. Vanderbilt's venture on the Brighton road.

The modern coach travels quite as fast as its predecessor when required: as witness James Selby's famous performance on 13th July 1888. He left the White Horse Cellar at 10 A.M.; arrived at the Old Ship, Brighton, 1.56 P.M.; turned and reached town at 5.50; the journey out and home again being accomplished in 7 hours 50 minutes: part of the way between Earlswood and Horley he travelled at a rate of twenty miles an hour.

Nor are modern horse-keepers less 'nimble fingered' than those of whom Nimrod wrote. At the International Horse Show of 1908 Miss Brocklebank's grooms won the Hon. Adam Beck's prize for 'Best coach and appointments and quickest change of teams': the change was accomplished in forty-eight seconds. During James Selby's Brighton drive horses were changed at Streatham in forty-seven seconds.

The road coachmen of the present day do not aim at lightning changes of team: the work is done in leisurely fashion, and passengers enjoy the opportunity afforded them to get down for a few minutes.

COACHING

The Four-in-Hand Club, founded in 1856, for many years used to meet in the Park at quarter to five in the afternoon, but the hour was changed to half-past twelve in order to avoid the inconvenience inseparable from meeting at the time when carriages are most numerous.

The Coaching Club was founded in 1870, and held its first meet at the Marble Arch in June the following year.

SONG OF THE B.D.C.[1]

You ask me, Gents, to sing a song,
Don't think me too encroaching.
I won't detain you very long,
With one of mine on Coaching.
No rivalry we have to fear,
Nor jealous need we be, Sir,
We all are friends who muster here,
And in the B.D.C., Sir.

Horace declares the Greeks of old
Were once a driving nation;
But Shakespeare says 'The World's a Stage'—
A cutish observation.
The Stage he meant, good easy man,
Was drawn by nine old Muses;
But the Mews for me is the B.D.C.,
And that's the stage I chooses.

I call this Age the Iron Age
Of Railways and Pretension,
And coaching now is in a stage
Of horrible declension.
The day's gone by when on the Fly
We roll'd to Alma Mater,
And jovial took the reins in hand
Of the Times or Regulator.

Those were the days when Peyton's grays
To Bedfont led the way, Sir,
And Villebois followed with his bays
In beautiful array, Sir.
Then Spicer, too, came next in view
To join the gay procession.
Oh! the dust we made—the cavalcade
Was neat beyond expression.

No Turnpike saw a fancy team
More neat than Dolphin sported,
When o'er the stones with Charley Jones
To Bedfont they resorted.
Few graced the box so much as Cox;
But there were none, I ween, Sir,
Who held the reins 'twixt here and Staines
More slap up than the Dean, Sir.

Those are the men who foremost then
To Coaching gave a tone, Sir,
And hold they will to coaching still,
Tho' here they stand alone, Sir,—
Then drink to the Coach, the B.D.C.,
Sir Henry and his team, Sir,
And may all be *blowed* right off the road
Who wish to go by steam, Sir.

[1] Benson Driving Club.

TANDEM DRIVING

IT is said, but I must confess failure to trace authority for the statement, that tandem driving was invented as a convenient and sporting method of taking the hunter to the meet. History has not handed down to fame the name of the man who first hit upon the idea of driving tandem; it was in vogue over a century ago, and at Cambridge ranked as a grave offence: witness the following edict dated 10th March 1807:—

'WE, THE VICE-CHANCELLOR AND HEADS OF COLLEGES, DO HEREBY ORDER AND DECREE THAT IF ANY PERSON OR PERSONS *IN STATU PUPILLARI* SHALL BE FOUND DRIVING ANY TANDEM AND SHALL BE DULY CONVICTED THEREOF BEFORE THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, SUCH PERSON OR PERSONS SO OFFENDING SHALL FOR THE FIRST OFFENCE BE SUSPENDED FROM TAKING HIS DEGREE FOR ONE WHOLE YEAR, OR BE RUSTICATED, ACCORDING TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CASE; AND FOR THE SECOND OFFENCE BE LIABLE TO SUCH FURTHER PUNISHMENT AS IT MAY APPEAR TO DESERVE, OR BE EXPELLED THE UNIVERSITY.'

Extravagantly high gigs were much in favour among the 'bloods' of the day, and these were often used for tandem driving, a purpose for which they were by no means unsuitable, always provided the road was fairly level.

As a matter of course, when tandems became numerous and drivers clever in handling them, races against time came into fashion. Matches on the road, whether trotting in saddle or driving, were usually 'against time' for obvious reasons. On 14th April 1819 the famous whip, Mr. Buxton, backed himself to drive tandem without letting his horses break their

trot, from Hounslow to Hare Hatch, distance twenty-four miles, in two hours. His horses, however, were not well matched, and 'broke' before they had gone six miles. As breaking involved the penalty of turning the equipage round and starting afresh, and breaks were frequent, Mr. Buxton occupied over an hour in going ten miles and gave up, forfeiting the hundred guineas he had staked on the task.

On 19th May 1824 a match was thus recorded in the *Sporting Magazine*:—

'Captain Swann undertook a tandem match from Ilford seven miles, over a part of Epping Forest. He engaged to drive 12 miles at a trot and to back his wheels if he broke into a gallop. This happened only once in the seventh mile, which he nevertheless completed in 33 minutes. On his return the pacing of the horses was a picture. The match was won fairly with two minutes and six seconds to spare.'

A Mr. Houlston in the same year drove his tandem twelve miles on the Winchester Road in one minute thirty-nine seconds under the hour allowed. By this time tandem drivers had come to the reasonable conclusion that the turning penalty (proper enough in trotting matches, whether in shafts or saddle) was excessive for their sport, and 'backing' had been substituted therefor. Any one who has had occasion to turn a tandem on the road without assistance will admit that the abolition was wise.

Long journeys against time were sometimes undertaken. In 1824

'Captain Bethel Ramsden undertook to drive tandem from Theale to London, 43 miles, in 3 hours and 40 minutes. The start took place at four o'clock in the morning, and in the first hour the captain did 12½ miles to between Twyford and Hare Hatch. He did in the next hour 12 miles and upwards, and got the horses' mouths cleaned at Slough. He had 5½ miles to do in the last forty minutes, and performed it easily with eleven minutes to spare.'

The cult of the trotting horse stood high in those days

when so much travelling was done in the saddle: there are innumerable records of trotters doing their fifteen and sixteen miles on the road within the hour, sometimes under very heavy weights. Mr. Charles Herbert's horse, in 1791, trotted 17 miles in 58 minutes 40 seconds on the Highgate Road, starting from St. Giles' Church. The road is by no means a level one, and the only advantage the horse had was the hour selected—between six and seven in the morning, when the traffic was not heavy.

A famous whip of the 'thirties was Mr. Burke of Hereford—he was also an amateur pugilist of renown, but that does not concern us here. In June 1839 he made his thirty-fifth trotting match, whereby he undertook to drive tandem forty-five miles in three hours. The course was from the Staines end of Sinebury Common to the fifth milestone towards Hampton: he did it with four and a half minutes to spare. The horses used in this match were both extraordinary trotters: the wheeler, Tommy, had covered 20 miles in 1 hour 18 minutes two months earlier, and the leader, Gustavus, twenty-four years old, had done his 20 miles in 1 hour 14 minutes.

Though not a tandem performance in the strict sense of the term, Mr. Thanes' feat on 12th July 1819 is worth mention. He undertook 'to drive three horses in a gig, tandem fashion, eleven miles within the hour on the trot, and to turn if either horse broke.' Fortunately none of the three did break, and he did the eleven miles, on the road near Maidenhead, with three minutes to spare.

Tandem driving seems to have gone out of fashion to a certain extent about 1840, though some young men 'still delighted in it.' The re-establishment of the Tandem Club, soon after the close of the Crimean War, marked a revival which made itself felt at Cambridge; for on 22nd February 1866 the Senate passed another edict, this time forbidding livery-stable-keepers to let out on hire tandems or four-in-hands to undergraduates. This was confirmed in 1870.

POLO

IF the history of polo in England be short, the history of the game elsewhere is of the longest. Mr. T. F. Dale[1] says it was played as far back as 600 B.C. among the Persians. There is in existence a curious old picture, which was taken from the palace of the King of Oude, representing an early game of polo: and whatever rules may then have been in vogue, the resemblance of the implements to those of the present day is noticeable; the shape of the stick used suggests a lighter ball; and, unless the players were very small men, the horses they ride are at least fifteen hands. Mr. Dale cites *The Tale of the Wazir and Sage Duban* as containing the tale of the genesis of the game. Yuan, King of Fars in the land of Roum, being afflicted with leprosy, permitted the Sage Duban to undertake his case, all other physicians having failed; and the sage, according to the chronicler translated by Sir Richard Burton, 'set to work at choosing the fittest drugs and simples, and he fashioned a bat hollow within and furnished with a handle without, for which he made a ball: the two being prepared with consummate art. On the next day, when both were ready for use and wanted nothing more, he went up to the King; and kissing the ground between his hands bade him ride forth on the parade ground, there to play pall and mall. He, the King, was accompanied by his suite, Emirs and Chamberlains, wazirs and lords of the realm, etc. Ere he was seated the sage Duban came to him, and handing him the bat said, "Take the mall and grip it as I do; so! and now push for the plain, and leaning well over thy horse drive the ball with all thy might until thy

[1] *The Game of Polo.*

palm be moist and thy body perspire, then the medicines will penetrate though thy palm and will permeate thy person. When thou hast done with playing and thou feelest the effects of the medicine, return to thy palace and make the ablution in the Hammam bath and lay thee down to sleep, so shalt thou become whole, and peace be with thee.

'Thereupon King Yuan took the bat from the sage and grasped it firmly, then mounting steed he drove the ball before him and galloped after it till he reached it, when he struck it well with all his might, his palm gripping the bat handle the while, and he ceasing not malling the ball till his hand waxed moist and his skin perspiring, imbibed the medicine from the wood.'

'There is only one cure for all maladies sure': but the most ardent may doubt whether leprosy would yield even to a course of fox-hunting. Let that pass, however: King Yuan and his malady, whatever it may have been, are faded into oblivion; the cure remains. That Sage Duban should have escaped beatification for five-and-twenty centuries, albeit his prescription had been adopted by half the nations of the East ere it was vouchsafed to our knowledge, is melancholy proof of the ingratitude of mankind.

The Chinese would seem to have taken kindly to the game, when it was brought to their notice about 1400 years ago. 'Polo,' says Mr. Herbert Giles, Professor of Chinese at Cambridge,[1] 'seems to have become known to them under the T'ang Dynasty, or from about A.D. 600 onwards, when it was at first considered by some writers . . . to be a revival of football, though it was no doubt quite a separate game, learnt, most probably, by the Chinese from the Tartars. The earliest mention of the game is by Shin Chüanch'i, a poet who died in 713.' More than one Chinese Emperor took part in the game. Professor Giles quotes from a memorial presented to a reigning sovereign of the tenth century, in which the following reason among others is urged against the participation of royalty:

[1] *Nineteenth Century and After*, March 1906.

Tandem

G.D. ARMOUR

'To jump on a horse and swing a club, galloping madly here and there with no distinction of rank, but only eager to be first and win, is destructive of all ceremony between sovereign and subject.' The risk of accident was also urged. 'The Emperor sighed over its excellence for a long time' when this memorial was handed in. What his Imperial Majesty said concerning the relative importance of ceremony and polo, unhappily, has not been recorded; but perhaps we can guess. Professor Giles has unearthed a brief description of the game as played by the Tartars, to whom China is thought to have owed introduction of it :—

'The players mounted well-trained ponies, and each one was provided with a club (ball-staff) of a good many feet in length and shaped at one end like the crescent moon. They were then divided into two teams, the object of contention to both sides being a ball. Previously, at the south end of the ground two poles had been set up, with boarding in between, in which a hole had been cut, having a net attached to it in the form of a bag. That side which could strike the ball into the bag were the winners. Some say that the two teams were ranged on opposite sides of the ground, each with its own goal, and that victory was gained by driving the ball through the enemies' goal. The ball itself was as small as a man's fist, made of a light but hard wood and painted red.'

Perhaps there were two varieties of the game, and the latter, being the better, outlived the single goal and net-bag arrangement. However this may be, the latter is the game played by the Chitralis and other frontier tribes, including the Munipuris, from whom we learned it.

Polo was first played in British territory by the planters in the tea districts of Cachar in 1854-1855. The tea-planting district was full of Munipuris who had settled there, political refugees from their own states. These had brought with them among other things their polo ponies, and each group of villages had its own little club, a circumstance which naturally produced frequent matches. In the early 'fifties, when the planters

came into the station of Cachar at Christmas, matches would be arranged on the parade ground between them and the Munipuris: three of the former against half a dozen of the latter was the usual thing. Between 1854 and 1859 the European population of Cachar increased greatly, and after the interruption caused by the Mutiny the game had become so popular that steps were taken to form the first club. The first meeting was held in the bungalow of Captain Robert Stewart, Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, in March 1859. Captain Stewart was a keen player, as also was the Assistant Commissioner, Captain 'Joe' Sherer: these two, with Messrs. James Davidson, Julius Sandeman, James Abernethy, Ernest Ekhart, Arthur Brownlow, W. Walker and J. P. Stuart, were the original members of the first British Polo Club.

The game was first played in the plains of India, towards the close of the cold season of 1862. The players were officers of the 7th Hussars, 2nd Bn. Rifle Brigade, and 89th Regiment at Umballa; and 'hockey on horseback' was adopted as an acceptable alternative to the paperchases which had served as substitute for the hunting which for the season had been abandoned owing to scarcity of fox and jackal.

Business connected with the tea industry brought to Cachar young men from Calcutta, and these, entered to polo, brought the game with them on their return. The real establishment of polo in the capital dates from February 1864, when Major Sherer, as he then was, brought down a team of six Munipuris to show how the game should be played. The game caught on at once: Major Sherer was canonised as 'Father of Polo,' was entertained at a great banquet in the Indigo Mart, and presented with a very handsome silver tankard and salver.

Here is an account of the match which was played on the Calcutta maidan before the King on 1st January 1876 when, as Prince of Wales, he visited India. It was contributed to the *Oriental Sporting Magazine* by a writer who subscribes himself 'Marc O'Polo.' The match was arranged at the special request of Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, who took a keen interest in

the game and maintained, contrary to the generally received opinion, that the Europeans would make a good fight of it.

'The afternoon of Saturday, 1st January 1876, was fixed for the match, and the noise of it having been bruited abroad, at the appointed hour a vast concourse of people assembled (on foot, on horseback, and in carriages), and whilst the players were girding up their loins and their ponies' girths for the coming contest, took up their places round the four sides of the ground, forming a boundary line of living bodies more distinguishable than the cut in the turf. The Prince arrived with punctuality, and on taking up a prominent position in the centre of the ground, surrounded by his staff and large party from Government House, the rival champions cantered into the lists. Imagine, if it is possible, the Eton and Harrow match transported from Lord's to the Calcutta *maidan*, and instead of 22 cricketers, 12 polo players the centre of attraction, and you have the scene before you.

'Calcutta was represented by Mr. W. L. Thomas (Captain), Mr. G. E. Thomas, Mr. C. R. Hills, Mr. C. H. Moore, Mr. G. Fox, Captain D. A. J. Wallace, R.E.; and Munipore by Bedam Sing, (Captain), and five others, whose names I have been unable to discover. I hear one was named Chai Tai Yar No Hazaree, and no doubt the others were gentlemen of equally high degree, and with names equally unspellable and unpronounceable. The two sides formed a marked contrast. The fair-skinned amateurs were clothed in white breeches and top boots, and flannel racing jackets of the club colours, *viz.* white with a broad scarlet sash crossing over the left and under the right shoulder, and compared to their antagonists were the personification of elegance and agility, their attire being natty in the extreme, and their ponies, on which they sat with ease and grace peculiar to the European seat, being sleek and well-groomed. The dusky professionals were clothed in a costume striking to the European eye, from its originality of design, unique though hardly picturesque. Their heads were muffled up in dirty puggeries; their bodies were covered with jackets

of divers colours all of a dingy hue and the inevitable *dhootee*; and between the knee and the ankle they wore things somewhat resembling cricket pads. The unusual *quantity* of clothing we conclude was donned in honour of the Belatee Rajah,[1] for when they first appeared in public they wore little except a hockey stick. Their ponies were shaggy, unkempt and ungroomed, and the saddle gear almost beyond description. The saddles were a kind of cross between a pillion and an elephant howdah. They have a frame-work of skin and wood which rests on the ponies' backs, and above it soft leather for the rider. At the back is a sort of hollow, to sit in; in front of this comes a kind of mound, goodness knows what for, and in front of this is a curved frame like a pair of bull's horns over which their reins are hitched now and again. They cling to their saddles like monkeys, their naked feet rammed into rough iron stirrups braced up so short that their thighs are at right angles to their hips. Hanging from each side of the saddle are articles of the same colour and material, and very much the same shape, as carriage splash boards. The stirrups hang inside them and the two sides of the articles are curved round, away from the ponies' sides and in front of the players' legs, the object of them being apparently two-fold, *viz.* to protect the players' legs, and to extract the speed of terror out of the ponies, for when they get into action the splash-boards make a noise hideous enough to frighten the most stout-hearted tat. The prettiest part of the get-up was the ponies' headstalls, which were made of scarlet cloth dotted over with white worsted balls, and the reins were of a thick plaited substance and light blue colour.

'The men were a strong wiry-looking lot, but wore an anxious expression, arising perhaps from excess of keenness to win, rumour saying that they get 'toko' from the Rajah if they do not distinguish themselves. The Calcutta team, in perfect confidence of being utterly beaten, had no anxiety on this score, and commenced the game therefore in a more

[1] English Prince.

favourable frame of mind. The order of battle was as follows: Calcutta, *forwards*—Hills, Moore, Wallace; *half-backs*, W. L. Thomas and Fox; *back*—G. E. Thomas. The Munipoories ranged very differently, and the order they took showed the peculiarity of their game. They had one man, back, and three forwards, and of the remaining two, one posted himself between Calcutta half-backs, and the other alongside the Calcutta back. This rather astonished the world in general and the players alluded to in particular. Wherever the vicissitudes of the game took the latter there went also attendant sprites, and would not be shaken off. It had one good effect, for it made the Calcutta backs keep their eyes open and most careful to see that their back territories were never left for an instant unguarded. The game commenced as usual from the centre of the ground, and from the start until the close may well be described as fast and furious, high pressure being maintained throughout without abatement. It was one of the quickest and most interesting games I have ever witnessed, and the play was admirable. It was expected that the sides would be most unequal, and this being the impression there was not at the outset much enthusiasm, the only feeling in the bosoms of the spectators being one of curiosity; but as the game got into full swing and it was seen, that instead of being overpowered, the Calcutta men were fully holding their own, it gave way to excitement, which became intense when after a short struggle the Calcutta scored "first blood" by making a goal.

'Loud cheering then arose, and the other members of the club, who had hitherto been depressed and almost silent onlookers, awoke as from a trance, and for the rest of the match encouraged and aided their representatives by cheering advice and enthusiastic shouts. The Munipoories who were looking on grunted guttural dismay when the first goal was made, and looked as if they did not altogether like the appearance of things. After a brief respite the second game was begun. Like the first game it was obstinately contested, but unlike the previous game the goal was secured by the Munipoories,

whose dismay in consequence changed to guttural glee. One goal all. Excitement was great as the third game began. The Munipoories came up smiling. Calcutta men serious but determined. Again a long exciting struggle, but eventually a resolute rush of the Calcutta team carried the ball right up to their adversaries' goal, and after a short sharp scuffle it was smacked through the posts. Two goals to one; Europeans triumphant. Aboriginals growling gloomy expletives.

'After a change of ponies the fourth game began, and it was soon apparent that the second horses of the Calcutta men were not equal to the first, the result of which was that the ball remained throughout the game in unpleasant proximity to their goal, through which it was eventually hit, the Munipoories thus winning the fourth game, and again putting themselves on an equality with Calcutta, the state of the match in commencement of the fifth game being two goals all. Time was now short, and both sides buckled to in earnest for the final tussle, a slight gleam of the savage breaking out on the one side, whilst the aspect of the other was one of dogged determination. The Munipoories, who had a herd of ponies to choose from, had a decided pull after the change of nags, which was again evident from the play, and throughout the last game the ball was more often at the end of the Calcutta goal than the other. The defence, however, was staunch, and several vigorous sorties were made by the Calcutta men into the enemy's country. The Munipoories, however, would not be denied and pressed the siege close, but the Calcutta team successfully repelled all attacks, and at last, dusk setting in, time was called and the victory was neither to the black man nor the white.

'Thus did the memorable and exciting match end in a draw, both sides having scored two goals.

'The noticeable feature of the play of the Munipoories was their quickness, their good position, and the wonderful accuracy of their back shots whether made on the near side or the off side of their ponies. In making a run, however, they did not

strike me as being so good as some of the Calcutta players, sometimes galloping over the ball, and not making such long hits. The Calcutta team played very well, both individually and collectively, and quickly got into the Munipoorie style of play. The experience of this match leads to the conclusion it is much the best game, for had strict "off side" rules been in force the same free game could not have been played, and the principal science of the Munipoorie would have been of little effect.'

The significance of the Munipuris' method of placing their men will not be lost upon modern players.

The first match ever played in England was that between the 9th Lancers and 10th Hussars at Hounslow Heath in the summer of 1871. Major St. Leger Moore, of the former regiment, writing to *The World* of 27th July 1894, says, 'We played eight a side and with a small ivory or bone ball which I have now in my possession, and ash sticks.'

To whomsoever credit is due, polo received its social benison on 16th July 1872, when a team of the Blues played a team of the 9th Lancers before the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duke and Duchess of Teck, and a number of guests in the Home Park, Windsor. The ground was kept by a hundred men of the Blues, and as there was a large crowd present the scene must have been imposing. This is from *The Field*'s account of the game :—

'On behalf of the Blues, the Marquis of Worcester, Lord Arthur Somerset, the Hon. T. and Hon. C. Fitzwilliam, Lord Kilmarnock, and Mr. A. Egerton took the field. The 9th Lancers were represented by Lord W. Beresford, Capt. Clayton, Capt. Palairet, Mr. Moore, Mr. Green, and Mr. Wheeler. Mr. Hartopp and Capt. Ewart acted as umpires. The competitors were mounted on strong and active ponies, and each man was armed with a hockey stick about 4 ft. long, the handle of which was of bamboo, with the head flat and fixed on at an angle.... The ball was little larger than a cricket ball, and painted white to be easily distinguishable when rolling. The ground marked

off was about 400 yards in length by 200 in width, and consisted of good level turf, a goal being marked at either end with flags, as at football.

'Play commenced about half-past three o'clock, the Lancers winning choice of ground by a toss; but before the game began the competitors, at the desire of the Princess of Wales, fell in and passed in a body before the tent where the royal party were seated. A trumpeter having given the signal, the ball was thrown into the centre of the ground by a mounted outsider, and was charged at immediately by both parties. The scene which followed, as both sides endeavoured to drive the ball towards the goal of their opponents, and their nimble ponies were turned deftly or urged swiftly in pursuit of it, was eagerly watched by the spectators; and there could be no question as to the correctness of an opinion we heard expressed, that to get a good hit at the ball, under the circumstances of the contest, "required some jockeying." After play had continued for about an hour, during which the ball was several times driven out of the bounds, and the ponies were rested for a few minutes, the first goal was scored for the Lancers by a dexterous stroke on the part of Captain Clayton. The ponies were now refreshed, and when play was recommenced, no indications of weariness appeared in either the animals or their riders. The ball was driven from side to side of the ground repeatedly for something like twenty minutes, when the Blues were skilful enough to score a goal against that of their opponents. Mr. Egerton this time had the credit of the success on behalf of his party. In the *mêlée* preceding the goal the Marquis of Worcester, in stooping at the ball, received a stroke on the head which caused the blood to flow freely; but until his attention was called to it he was unaware that he had been hit, and by his good spirits after the match it was evident that the wound was not serious. A third time play was commenced, but at half-past five, the hour appointed for its termination, the trumpeter gave the signal, and the sport of the day ended in a drawn game. . . .

Polo

G. D. ARMOUR.

'It was certainly the general opinion that the inauguration of the eastern game as a public spectacle had been a great success; and there can be little doubt that we shall find "polo" ranking henceforth among established sports, at least among the officers of our cavalry, to whom it is especially suited. We did not observe that the animals ridden in the game of Tuesday were in any way distressed, although they were not changed during the play; but then, as before remarked, they were rested for a few minutes as opportunity offered.'

The team of six was soon reduced to one of five, and in 1883 the Hurlingham Rules restricted the number to four. The Sussex Club, whose team included the three brothers Peat, well-nigh invincible in the 'eighties, were the first to recognise the supreme importance of combined play so strenuously inculcated by the late Mr. Moray Brown.

In Mr. Moray Brown polo lost a chronicler whose place has never been filled. His account of the final of the County Cup Tournament of 1894 at Hurlingham, in which Edinburgh beat Rugby by three goals to two, was one of the best of many descriptions he contributed to *Land and Water*:—

'Good as the first "twenty" had been, the succeeding one was no whit behind it in point of excellence, and began by Edinburgh attacking and hitting behind. Twice then Rugby made the mistake of trying to take the ball round instead of back-handing it, and the mistake was the more unpardonable from the fact of their missing it. But fortune favoured them, and their opponents also missed, thereby losing two chances of scoring. But what will you? We are all prone to make mistakes, and after all it will be more charitable, after pointing out the tactical error on the part of Rugby, to put down the missing to rough and bumpy ground. But Edinburgh meant business; they had got their adversaries fairly penned, and had no intention of allowing them to break through the cordon of investment. At length out of the scuffle shot Mr. "Jack" Drybrough on Robin. With neat near-side strokes he manœuvred the ball past more than one aggressive foe, and,

passing it on to Captain Egerton-Green most beautifully, enabled the gallant Lancer, who was on Sultan and anxiously awaiting his opportunity, to score. On ends being changed, some not very interesting play took place under the boards by the band-stand—why does the ball always go there, by the bye ?—during which Edinburgh got the best of the fight, and eventually hit behind, and soon after Rugby, who were sorely pressed, did the same in self-defence.

'Ah ! now see Rugby will no longer brook being placed on the defensive. The ball, well hit out by Mr. G. A. Miller, is carried on by his comrades ; Lord Shrewsbury, easily distinguishable by his lighter-coloured shirt, is making the running on Lo-Ben, and with Mr. " Jack " Drybrough weaponless—he had dropped his stick—the chances seem in favour of Rugby. On they sweep ; a back-hander of Mr. G. A. Miller's lands the ball on the very threshold of Edinburgh's goal, and—? No, it wasn't a goal, but only saved by Mr. T. B. Drybrough, who, in the nick of time, hit behind in self-defence. Now surely Rugby has a chance, as they meet the charge out in line of their opponents. Back goes the ball ; Lord Shrewsbury clears the front for his comrades, dropping into Mr. Beatty's place as if the pair had been playing No. 1 and No. 2 respectively all their lives, whilst Mr. E. D. Miller, intent on goal-hitting, comes up with a rattle on The Snipe. But he makes a bad shot, and soon Rugby hits behind. Shortly after, however, he had his revenge and scored ; this was a smart bit of play, as coming up with a wet sail and foiled by the hard-smacked ball hitting a pony, he followed it up through the wheeling crowd, tapping it here and dribbling it there, till, in spite of all, he put it between the posts. It was pretty, I tell you. But a moment after Edinburgh went to the front again, and Mr. " Jack " Drybrough scored with a fine angle-shot through a perfect forest of ponies' legs. Emboldened by this success the Northern team forced the fighting after the change of ends, but Mr. E. D. Miller promptly foiled them. A glance at the scattered forces convinced him of the practica-

bility of a scheme which had flashed across his brain, and that scheme he promptly put into execution. On one flank foes mustered strong, on the other there was only one, so he rightly went for the weak spot and made his dash, which deserved a better fate than being spoilt by the ball going over the boards. Again it went out of play, and then Edinburgh attacked in earnest. Their play was combined, and nothing could have been better than their valour, but they met their match ; the Messrs. Miller frustrated their every attempt, and, directly the slightest opportunity presented itself, turned defence into attack.

'Then the ball went out, and I am going to take refuge in Notes with an apology for their incoherent brevity. Thus they read : "Scrimmage, and soon Green has shot at goal, but wide of posts ; slow scuffle, till "Jack" Drybrough a dart on Wriggler (A1 pony this), but E. D. Miller equal to occasion, ousts him, and works up to pavilion, when Younger hooks stick illegally, and foul given again Edinburgh, who have to go back to own goal line. Soon after a sharp bit of fighting." Ay, was it indeed, and would that I could put as much life into my narrative as did Mr. E. D. Miller into the game. Into an opening he shot on Johnnie with heels going almost in the good Arab's haunches as he urged him to fresh effort. On with never a swerve or shy the brave pony swept, with his long chestnut tail flung to the wind. On, ever on ; Khalifa gallops his hardest to catch him ; so does Lady D., whose twinkling feet hardly seem to touch the greensward ; so does Charlton, but none can catch him. He has the *vis viva*, his rider smites straight and true, a second more the "whoo-whoop" announces a goal, a lovely one, gained for Rugby. Score—two goals all.'

RACING

DESCRIPTIVE accounts of races until the nineteenth century are curiously few. Their paucity is to be regretted, for the occasional sidelights we obtain from the old Calendars—Pond, Cheney, Heber, and Tutting and Falconer—suggest that eighteenth-century meetings were conducted in a happy-go-lucky fashion as regards management, while the glimpses we get of racing and its surroundings from other sources indicate the loss of a peculiarly interesting chapter of English social life. The crowd that lined the course in the days when four-mile heats were started by beat of drum offered large possibilities to the descriptive writer.

In an earlier day 'crossing and jostling' were recognised methods of spoiling the chances of a competitor; but by the middle of the eighteenth century these heroic methods of race-riding were falling into disuse on English courses. In 1751 the Articles relating to His Majesty's Plates included the proviso that 'as many of the Riders as shall cross, jostle, or strike or use any other foul play, shall be made incapable of ever riding—for any of His Majesty's Plates hereafter.' The Rules concerning Racing published in 1752 provide, it is true, that 'Crossing and Jostling is allowed in matches if no agreement to the contrary'; but from the absence of comment such as would show that crossing and jostling were practised, it would seem that an 'agreement to the contrary' was usual at this time. At the Epsom November meeting of 1769, Mr. Bishop's Pancake beat Lord Milsington's Surry, 'but being accused of crossing of Surry the match was given to Surry.' These methods were continued in Ireland: at the Trim, Co. Meath, meeting in March 1752, Messrs. Moore and Scott's

bay mare was 'thrown down by a jostle and killed, and the rider, Mr. Scott, violently bruised.' Again at Loughrea, Co. Galway, in August of the same year, 'Mr. Daly's Gelding was thrown down in the third heat and killed by the fall.'

Such incidents grow rarer as we look through the Calendars, and twenty years later their total cessation suggests that crossing and jostling had been given up in Ireland also.

Matches formed a prominent feature of most meetings in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Taking a Calendar at random (it happens to be that of 1772) and turning to the Newmarket Second Spring meeting, we find that the six days' racing, 11th to 16th May inclusive, consisted of fifteen sweepstakes, 'subscriptions' and plates, and twenty-nine matches; while in eighteen other matches which had been arranged forfeit was paid. At most meetings the stake was usually the £50 minimum allowed by law (13 Geo. II., c. 19), and the big prize of the meeting fortunate enough to secure it was a Royal Plate worth a hundred guineas. Far more valuable prizes might, of course, be won at Newmarket, where sweepstakes of a hundred guineas each figured at every meeting: matches were arranged for any stake from £50 a side to £2000 or more. In those days when enclosed meetings and gate money were unknown, the greatest proportion of the cash was found by the men who ran horses; but at minor meetings the authorities looked to the winner to contribute something out of the stakes towards the sport. Thus at Barnet in 1751 the winner of each of the three races was required to pay six guineas 'towards Repairing the Course, Setting up Posts and keeping them in Repair.' At the Canterbury meeting of the same year the winner of the County Plate, £50, was 'enjoin'd to pay three guineas towards the expense attending the Race, and of the City Plate, £50, ten Pounds towards a Purse to be run for in the following year.'

Reference has been made to the happy-go-lucky fashion in which racing was carried on. Here is an example: at the Newmarket October meeting of 1752, Mr. Edward Popham ran

his grey filly by Crab against Mr. Valentine Knightley's Marplot over the Beacon Course for £50 a side; but they, or the stewards, had omitted to appoint a judge, and unfortunately they made so close a race of it that they could not decide between themselves who had won. 'As it occasioned some Disputes it was by Agreement left to Lord *Godolphin*, who determined it to be a drawn Match.' An extraordinary case occurred at the Farn (Cheshire) meeting of 1761, when Mr. Egerton's Dionysius and the Hon. Harvey Ashton's Wildair were entered for the Second Annual Prize of twenty-one guineas.[1] Says the Calendar: 'Dionysius started alone between 12 and 3. Wildair started alone between 3 and 5. A dispute arose which was entitled to the Plate, and was not settled when this went to Press.' We must suppose that a time was appointed for starting that race; but if this trifling formality had been overlooked, the point was indeed a knotty one for the authorities to determine, supposing them to regard the performance as a race at all.

The hard case presented to the judge by an accident at the Oxford meeting of 1731 probably arose from a too successful jostle. Conqueror and John Trot fell together so near the 'ending post' that the judge could not determine whether either horse had carried his rider past the post. The method adopted to decide the point was curious: 'a person making an affidavit that before John Trot fell his weight at least had passed the post,' his evidence was accepted and the race awarded to that horse. The proceeding displays confidence in the disinterestedness of that person.

One or two races sufficed for a day's sport when the event was decided in heats of two, three, or four miles with half an hour 'for rubbing' between. Three heats usually revealed the winner, but when fields were large, more were often required. At the Beverley meeting held in May 1751, nine five-year-olds started for a £50 purse, three-mile heats: each

[1] An endowed race: and therefore exempted from operation of the Act which prescribed a £50 minimum stake.

of the first three heats was won by a different horse, so a fourth, in which these three started, was run to decide it. At the Carlisle meeting of May 1761, nine four-year-olds started for a £50 stake, two-mile heats, weight 9 stone. Cadabora won the first; Stella, the second; Cadabora and Heart of Oak 'were so near together the judges could not tell which won' the third; Bold Burton won the fourth; Cadabora and Bold Burton ran a dead heat for the fifth; and the sixth and last was won by Cadabora, Bold Burton second, and Stella third. In their later days these long heats were not always ridden out from start to finish. Nimrod, writing of the early decades of the nineteenth century, says: 'So much is the system of a four-mile heat disliked, that when it does occur the horses often walk the first two miles.' Sir Charles Bunbury is said to have been the man who brought about the discontinuance of races in four-mile heats.

Thus were handicaps made under mid-eighteenth-century rules: 'A Handy-Cap Match is for *A.* *B.* and *C.* to put an equal sum into a Hat. *C.*, which is the Handy-Capper, makes a match for *A.* and *B.*, which when perused by them they put their Hands into their Pockets and draw them out closed, then they open them together, and if both have money in their hands, the match is confirmed: if neither have money it is no Match. In both Cases the Handy-Capper draws all the money out of the Hat: but if one has Money in his Hand and the other none, then it is no Match: and he that has the money in his Hand is entitled to the Deposit in the Hat.'

The Handy-Capper under these conditions had inducement to make a match which should be accepted by both parties.

The thoroughbred of this period, it is hardly necessary to remark, was a very different animal from his modern descendant. As Sir Walter Gilbey has pointed out in his *Thorough-bred and Other Ponies*, 'fourteen hands was the normal or average height of the race-horse' during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The racing career of the thoroughbred then began

at an age when his descendant of our own day is retiring from active life. The practice of racing two-year-olds (I quote again from Sir Walter Gilbey) was introduced about the end of the eighteenth century, 'bringing with it the inevitable process of forcing the growth of young stock.' Staying power and ability to carry weight were the distinguishing characteristics of these old-time race-horses, not speed as we understand it. Could Eclipse and Ormonde be recalled to life together, Eclipse would hardly be able to keep Ormonde in sight.

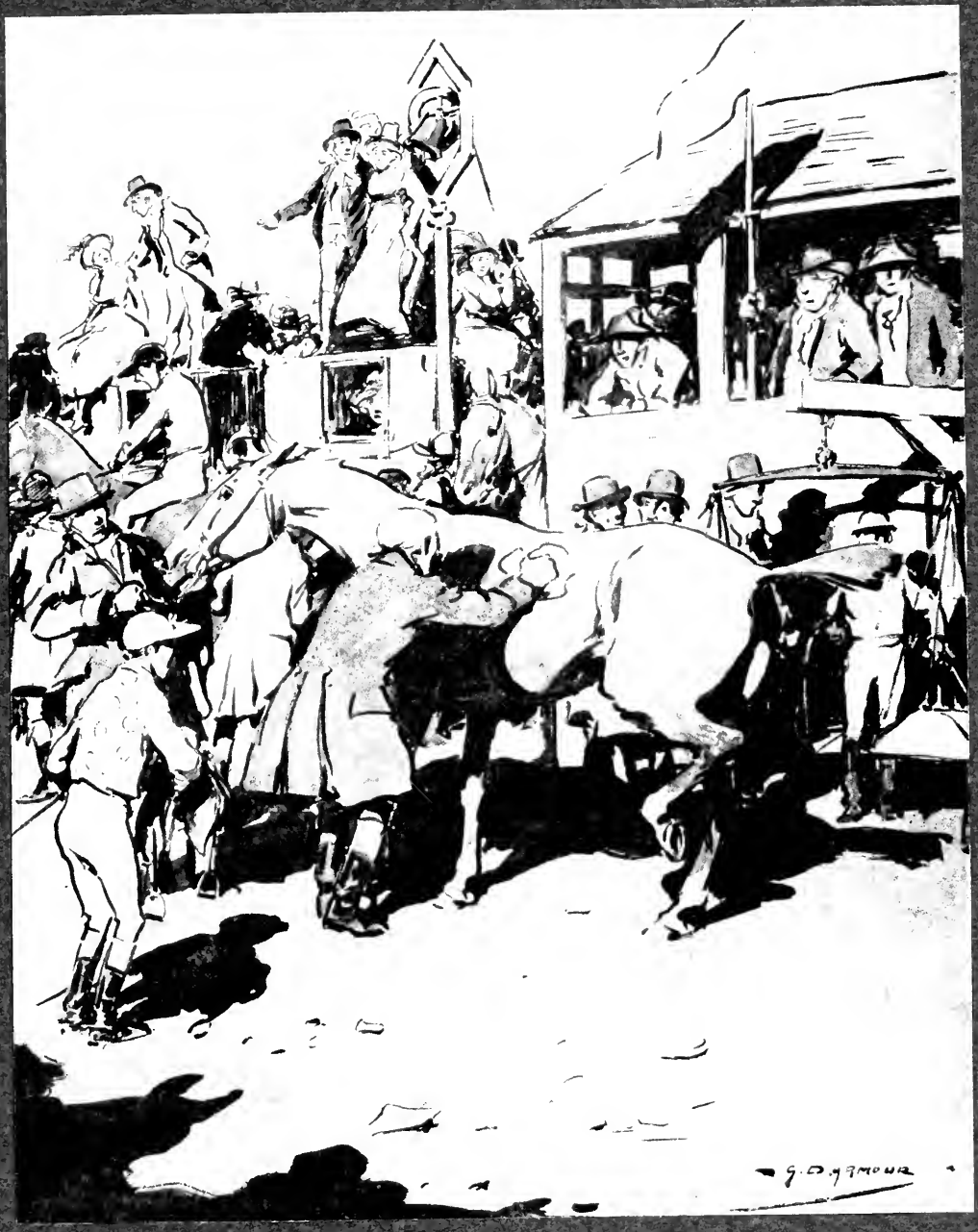
The behaviour of the race-going crowd in old times left much to desire. We can draw our own conclusions from a passage in the Act of 1740 (13 Geo. II., c. 19) already referred to. The object of this statute was not only to make an end of racing worthless horses at small local meetings by prescribing the weights to be carried [1] and the value of stakes; it declared another purpose with a candour incompatible with a low franchise qualification; seeking 'to remove all temptation from the lower class of people who constantly attend these races to the great loss of time and hindrance of labour, and whose behaviour still calls for stricter regulation to curb their licentiousness and correct their manners.'

The manners of the crowd in George II.'s time must indeed have stood in urgent need of correction if those of the crowd sixty years later exhibited any improvement. Small local meetings in Kent *may* have been attended by a mob more disorderly than that which patronised others; but if this description of the behaviour of the mob at two meetings on the south-west coast is representative, we have to congratulate ourselves on a very vast improvement. Thus the famous painter, George Morland, then a young man of one or two and twenty, wrote to his friend, Philip Dawe, in the autumn of 1785:—

'You must know I have commenced a new business of jockey to the races; I was sent for to Mount Pleasant [East of

[1] The clauses which related to weights were repealed five years later by 18 Geo. II., c. 34.

Racing in Old Times:
Between the Heats


G.D. ARMOUR

Minster five miles from Margate] by the gentlemen of the turf, to ride a racer for the silver cup, as I am thought to be the best horseman here. I went there and was weighed and afterwards dressed in the tight-striped jacket and jockey's cap, and lifted on the horse, led to the start, placed in the rank and file; three parts of the people laid great bets that I should win the cup, etc. Then the drums beat and we started: 'twas a four-mile heat, and the first three miles I could not keep the horse behind them, being so spirited an animal: by that means he soon exhausted himself, and I soon had the mortification to see them come galloping past me, hissing and laughing, whilst I was spurring his guts out. A mob of horsemen then gathered round, telling me I could not ride, which is always the way if you lose the heat: they began at last to use their whips, and finding I could not get away, I directly pulled off my jacket, laid hold of the bridle, and offered battle to the man who began first, though he was big enough to eat me: several gentlemen rode in, and all the mob turned over to me, and I was led away in triumph with shouts. But, however, I did not fare near so well at Margate races, and was very near being killed; I rode for a gentleman and won the heat so completely, that when I came into the winning post the other horses were near half a mile behind me, upon which near four hundred sailors, smugglers, fishermen, etc., set upon me with sticks, stones, waggoners' whips, fists, etc., and one man, an innkeeper here, took me by the thigh and pulled me off the horse: I could not defend myself: the sounds I heard all were, "Kill him!" "Strip him!" "Throw him in the sea!" "Cut off his large tail!" and a hundred other sentences rather worse than the first. I got from them once, and ran into the booth: Michiner rode in to me, dismounted and took me up in his arms, half beat to pieces, kept crying to the mob to keep back, and that his name was Michiner and he would notice them: at last, a party of light horsemen and several gentlemen and their servants, some post-boys, hairdressers, bakers, and several other people I knew armed themselves with sticks, etc., and

ran in to my assistance and brought me a horse, though the mob pressed so hard 'twas long before I could mount.'

The methods permitted at Mount Pleasant were evidently not such as would be approved at more strictly ordered meetings : Morland, it will be noticed, weighed out first and donned his colours afterwards.

Twenty years later we obtain another glimpse, brief but eloquent, of the state of affairs prevailing on a very different course. Thus the *Sporting Magazine* of 1806 :—

' From the number of accidents that have happened by the intemperance of drivers and the crowds on the course at Epsom, it has been agreed that there shall not be any races run after dinner, and it is imagined that the Derby and Oaks Stakes will shortly be transferred to some other place.'

It is worth reproducing this by way of showing the contrast between those days and our own. Accidents occur on Epsom Downs, and not every man of the crowd—ten times the size of the 1806 crowd, we may be sure—goes home sober; but the multitude takes its pleasure in cleaner fashion now than it did a century ago.

Turning to more recent times, here is ' The Druid's ' account of the St. Leger of 1850, famous for the dead heat between Voltigeur and Russborough :—

' At last the flags were lowered, and away went the eight in a cluster, Nat going in front at once and cutting out the work with Beehunter; Chatterbox and Russborough well up, and Voltigeur settling down about seventh. Along the flat the pace was very slow, but when they reached the foot of the hill Beehunter seemed to warm to his work, and led them up and over it at capital speed. No change took place in their Indian-file positions until they approached the Red House, when Marson took Voltigeur well by the head and administered a couple of smart strokes of the whip to rouse him to a sense of his position. The gallant brown answered immediately, and at the Intake Farm was fifth, with Pitsford and Beehunter on his left, Bolingbroke on his right, and Russborough and

Italian at his quarters. Just at this point Bolingbroke looked formidable; but in another hundred yards he began to hang towards the rails, and Marson, seeing at a glance that he would be shut out, promptly shot his horse through the gap and took the lead at the distance, Russborough being handy on the off-side. Half way up the distance Marson steadied his horse, who seemed to be in slight difficulties from the severe pace, and just when he got him extended again Jim Robinson, with a well-timed effort, swooped down upon Marson, and after a thrilling finish made a dead heat.

'As Russborough was nearest to the Judge the great majority of spectators thought that he had won, and when the fielders learnt the decision their joy knew no bounds.

'The two antagonists made their way back to the enclosure, and were keenly scrutinised as their jockeys dismounted and unsaddled them. Some strong suspicions were expressed that Russborough was a four-year-old, and an examination of his mouth was demanded by Lord Zetland. The horse was examined by Mr. George Holmes, the well-known veterinary of Thirsk, and by Mr. J. Shaw of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, who pronounced him all right. A little after five, when all the other races were over, the two champions of the day were again seen approaching the enclosure in their sheets. Robinson jumped into the pigskin with a jaunty air, and a whisper went round that he was going to make it hot for the Richmond-trained horse, by forcing the running. Marson then came out from the weighing house, looking very pale but full of quiet confidence, and mounted his horse on the course. Another canter, and another parade, and the two were again alongside Mr. Hibburd, the starter, waiting for the signal. Robinson at once showed that his cutting down intentions had not been misrepresented. The moment that the flag dropped he was off like a shot, and Marson as quickly got Voltigeur on his legs and laid off two lengths. The pace quickened as they rose the hill, and the fielders were in high hopes that the two lengths would become four when the T. Y. C. post was reached. They

reckoned, however, without their host, as the two steeds kept in exactly the same position till the Red House was passed. Into the straight running Russborough came with the same strong lead, Robinson glancing over his shoulder at Marson, who sat with his hands well down on his horse's withers, and as cool as an iceberg. The vast crowd closed in upon them, and the roar of a hundred thousand iron voices fairly rent the air. "Voltigeur's beat!" and "Is 'er beat?" was Bob Hill's response; "You maun't tell me that; I knaws 'im better—Job 's a coming!" And sure enough, Job, half way within the distance, slipped a finger off his rein, gave the Derby winner a sharp reminder with his spurs, had him at Russborough's girths in the next three strides, and landed him home a clever winner by a length. The hurrahs that greeted horse and jockey as they returned to the Stand were perfectly deafening, and became, if possible, louder when the Countess of Zetland descended with her husband and patted the conqueror's neck. Spotted handkerchiefs, symbolising Lord Zetland's colours, were waving everywhere, hats were flung recklessly in the air, and even the fielders cheered because one of the right sort had won. This was Voltigeur's third race, all of which he has won, and it is remarkable that Charles XII., the only other son of Voltaire who ever gained the St. Leger, had to run two heats for it.'

They who speak with authority maintain that a south-country crowd does not take the close interest in the horses and the racing that is taken by the men of the north: an Epsom crowd discusses anything but the racing: a Knavesmire or Doncaster crowd has thought and word for nothing else. But the south-country crowd is roused to an extraordinary pitch of enthusiasm on occasion.

One of the most memorable among Derbies was that of 1896: those who saw—and heard—are never likely to forget it.

'The mingled clamour on the Downs is dying away: the course has been cleared: the inevitable dog, a mongrel Irish terrier this time, has been hunted into private life among the

legs against the ropes, and the horses are coming out, while from the enormous throng rises the murmur of expectation. Here they come, one, two, three—eight of them. Where 's Persimmon and Bradwardine and Earwig ? Leave has been given for them to go straight to the start, says somebody behind us ; they are being saddled at Sherwood's and won't take part in the parade. The preliminary over, the eight take a short cut across to the starting post where Mr. Coventry is waiting. Somebody wants to know why Regret isn't running, and does not seem consoled when it is suggested that the hard ground probably explains his absence. Now the field of eleven has come under the starter's orders and the tense minutes of waiting begin : you feel the pent-up excitement through the comparative silence. It seems an hour—seven or eight minutes it proves—before the roar of " Off ! " heralds the vain rush of the crowd from the starting post across the Downs : it is a wonderful sight that advancing wave of humanity, but every eye is on the race. Who 's that in front ? Toussaint. Only for a moment : Woodburn has steadied him, and Bay Ronald, Bradwardine, Spook, Earwig, and Teufel draw out from the rest. Persimmon and St. Frusquin together whipping in. Now Gulistan leads ; Bradwardine overhauls him as they ascend the hill, passes him at the top, followed by St. Frusquin, Bay Ronald, and Teufel : Persimmon behind them, with Toussaint and Tamarind (" neither of those two, Derby horses," mutters a voice at our elbow) bringing up the rear, already out of it. Down the hill they come ; as they near Tattenham Corner, Bradwardine falls behind. Bay Ronald and St. Frusquin draw to the front with Persimmon in waiting. Bay Ronald leads round the Corner into the straight, but falls back leaving St. Frusquin and Persimmon to draw clear at the distance. It is between those two, and as the pair single themselves out the Downs find voice again in a swelling roar. St. Frusquin leads ! St. Frusquin ! St. Frusquin wins ! No ! Persimmon ! Persimmon ! for a hundred yards from home Watts on the Prince's horse

challenges, and the pair fight it out amid a roar of excitement which, when Persimmon wins by a neck, culminates in an outburst of cheering compared to which the previous uproar was a whisper. The hubbub that follows the winning of the Derby generally dies away as the horses pull up to return to scale; not so to-day. The purple and scarlet of the Heir to the Throne has been borne past the post first by a neck after a splendid race, and it is not a vast crowd of racegoers but of loyal subjects that is cheering. Now it lulls for a moment, now swells again, while hats by hundreds are thrown in the air by men fairly beside themselves. The crowd floods the course and surges, a dense mass, round the winner as Marsh leads him, escorted by mounted police, to the gate where the Prince is waiting. Another roar as Watts doffs his cap to His Royal Highness. Another lull. "All right!" from the weighing room, is acknowledged by yet another deafening storm of cheering. The crowd seems unable to leave off. "Well," says an old racegoer, "I have seen a good many Derbies, and I thought the demonstration when Ladas won couldn't be beaten; but it was *nothing* to this." '

The Derby crowd of Persimmon's year was one of the largest—some estimated it to be quite the largest—ever seen on Epsom Downs: the police maintained that there were a quarter of a million people present.

The Derby of 1901, Volodyovski's year, was the first in which the starting gate was used. The field was a large one, twenty-five horses, and only one, Orchid, made any objection to the barrier he was required to face.

The origin of the starting gate can be traced to the Arabs. The famous Emir Abd-el Kadir in the account of racing he gave General Daumas (*The Horses of the Sahara*) says: 'The horses are grouped together by tens, but before allowing them to start and to prevent false starts, the following precaution is taken. A rope is stretched across touching the animals' chests, the two ends of which are held by two men. This rope is called *el mikbad* and *el mikouas*.' The gate had been an

institution on Australian courses for some few years before its adoption in this country : every one remembers the animated discussion which followed the Jockey Club's decision to establish it on English courses two years after it had first been experimentally tried. The Tathwell Stakes at the Lincoln meeting of 1900 was the first race to be started by the gate under the compulsory rule which applied to the two-year-old events of that season, by way of progressively introducing the appliance to all races. Few of those connected with the turf would care to revert now to the old flag system of starting.

The autumn of 1897 saw the appearance at Newmarket of Sloan the American jockey, whose peculiar seat on a horse furnished food for abundant merriment—for a time. 'That Sloan,' says Mr. Charles Richardson in *The English Turf*, 'won races was at first regarded as a benevolent freak of Providence : for who, taking the accepted English seat as the model of perfection, could do justice to the race-horse in the monkey-on-a-stick attitude assumed by the American ?' Jocular criticism was silenced, however, when, in the autumn of 1898, Sloan came to England again, and in 98 races rode 41 winners, 21 seconds, and 7 thirds. The peculiarity of his seat perhaps did something to blind the majority to the fact that he was an extraordinarily good judge of pace and had exceptionally good hands. Sloan's success revolutionised the style of race-riding in Britain, but the change has not been all for the better. Races are now run from start to finish more frequently than they used to be, and this is attributed to the impossibility of properly controlling the horse when the 'monkey-on-a-stick' seat is assumed. To the same cause may be traced the frequent interference with one another of horses and 'bumping finishes.' After all, the old-fashioned seat in the saddle which allowed the jockey to *ride* his horse had much to recommend it over the attitude said to have been copied from North American Indian horsemen.

STEEPLE-CHASING

THE modern steeplechase or point to point race might hardly recognise the original parent of both. When the ardent 'bruiser' of the mid-eighteenth century felt moved to run his horse against another across country he challenged the owner of that other to a 'wild goose chase': whereof let old authority speak. It was:—

'A sort of racing on horse-back, used formerly, which resembled the flying of wild geese, those birds generally going in a train one after another, not in confused flocks as other fowls do. In this sort of race the two horses after running twelve-score yards had liberty, which horse soever could get the leading, to ride what ground the jockey pleased, the hindmost horse being bound to follow him within a certain distance agreed on by articles, or else be whipped in by the tryers and judges who rode by: and whichever horse could distance the other won the race.'

The obvious objection to this style of racing wrought its undoing. If the leader could not distance his rival—*i.e.* gain a lead of 240 yards—and the rival, faint yet pursuing, scorned to pull up, the horses might be galloped to death and yet leave the match drawn. Hence some daring innovator suggested the advantages of a race run over a specified distance: a plan which had humanity and common-sense to recommend it.

There is record of a cross-country race in Ireland in the year 1752, between Mr. O'Callaghan and Mr. Edmund Blake; four miles and a half; but this we must suppose was merely a solitary incident. Cross-country races, in England at all events, did not become a recognised form of sport until the early years of the nineteenth century; and they were not

Modern Racing:
The Starting Gate

G. D. ARMOUR

frequent then if we may base an opinion on this note in the *Sporting Magazine* of January 1804 :—

'CURIOUS HORSE RACE. A wager betwixt Captains Prescott and Tucker of the 5th Light Dragoons was determined on Friday, 20th inst., by a singular horse-race which we learn is denominated *steeple-hunting*. The race was run from Chapel Houses on the west turnpike, to the Cowgate, Newcastle, a distance of three miles in a direct line across the country, which Captain T. gained by near a quarter of a mile. The mode of running such races is not to deviate more than fifteen yards from the direct line to the object in view notwithstanding any impediments the rider may meet with, such as hedges, ditches, etc : the leading horse has the choice of road to the extent of the limits, and the other cannot go over the same ground, but still preserving those limits must choose another road for himself.'

A genuine point to point race you will observe : Captains Prescott and Tucker rode 'the direct line to the object in view,' just as in modern point to point races during the later 'seventies and early 'eighties, the field were lined up and despatched on their journey to some distant mark, church steeple or the like.

A famous race was that run on 30th March 1826 between Captain Horatio Ross and Captain Douglas. 'Nimrod' was among those present and he wrote an account of it—the first detailed description of a steeplechase extant :—

' . . . The following was the origin of the match—As Lord Kennedy, Captain Ross, and Mr. Cruickshank were on their road to Epsom races, last spring, the merits of a Captain Douglas (who hunts in Forfarshire) as a rider, became the topic of conversation, and a comparison was hazarded between him and some of the crack Melton men. Captain Ross observed that a tip-top *provincial* rider will generally be found *in the crowd* in a Leicestershire field—a truism which can never be doubted. It was then hinted that Captain Ross, with his stable of horses, ought to be always in the first flight

in the Quorn country. In short, to use an humble phrase, one word produced another; and the argument, as arguments among Englishmen generally do, concluded in a bet; and Captain Douglas was matched to ride four miles over Leicestershire against Captain Ross. . . . The ground run over—from Barkby Holt to Billesden Coplow—is generally supposed to want about a quarter of a mile of four miles, and is, for the most part, of very uneven surface. From the repeated trials each party had had over it, the fences were considerably broken; and were, indeed, not in a state to have stopped the commonest hack. Nevertheless, though the ground was dry enough to bear the horses, and all grass, it was distressing.

'The weight of the parties was as follows:—Douglas, previous to training, 14 st.; but he rode the race 12st. 9 lb. Ross, previous to training, 13 st. 5 lb.; and he rode the match 11st. 8 lb.; in a 10 lb. saddle. Mr. White was umpire to the former, and Sir Vincent Cotton to the latter, with Mr. Maxse as judge. When Captain Ross came to Melton for the winter, he found himself not only without a horse, in his own stable, which he considered fit for such a match, but he knew not where to go to find one. His friends, however, were particularly kind to him, and offered him the picking of their studs. After several trials a horse called Clinker, the property of Mr. Holyoake, was fixed upon; and as in his trial he went over the ground—then very deep—in eleven minutes and fifteen seconds, with Dick Christian, weighing 13st. 4 lb. on his back, little doubt, barring accidents, was entertained of his being the winner. Clinker was purchased by Mr. Holyoake from Mr. J. Leeds, a celebrated rider with the Oakley hounds; and is got by Clinker, dam by Sancho, granddam by Fidget, out of Lily of the Valley, by Eclipse. If any proof were wanting to shew the effect of condition on good form and high breeding it would be found in the remarkable instance of this horse having been formerly in Mr. Musters' stable and considered too bad to be kept at fifty pounds.

'The following facts should be stated to the very great

credit of Mr. Holyoake. From fear of accidents, he gave up hunting Clinker for two months before the race; and three weeks previous to the day of starting, he refused twelve hundred guineas for him[1]—declaring, that, as he had promised him to Captain Ross, five thousand should not purchase him.

'The same difficulty attended my Lord Kennedy in selecting a horse for this arduous undertaking. He first purchased a brown horse from Colonel Wallace, for £400; Why not, a horse that ran pretty well three years ago, as a cocktail; a brown horse, at a pretty large price, from the Hon. Mr. Moreton; and Radical,—the horse that started—from Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith, for £500. Radical, also got by Clinker, is quite thoroughbred; and Mr. Smith, who has ridden him three seasons, considered him the fastest horse he ever had. Lord Kennedy also deputed Captain Douglas to go to Lord Lynedoch, and offer him £800 for Whitestockings, the horse his Lordship purchased the season before last from Lord Kintore.

'The concourse of people upon the ground on the morning of the race was very great, and a considerable display of carriages was to be seen in the grounds of Quornby Hall, situated about a mile from the Coplow, and through which the riders were to pass.

'A little after two o'clock the gentlemen started; and as nearly as I could collect, the following is a statement of the race:—Mr Holyoake's instructions to Captain Ross were, that he should let Captain Douglas go first, provided he went off at a slapping pace; but if not, Clinker was to take the lead. Douglas, however, took the lead, and kept for about four fields, when Radical, refusing a fence, swerved against a gate, and threw his rider over it. Clinker followed him to the gate, and here some confusion arose. Ross was not shaken from his seat; but in consequence of the wrists of both these gentlemen being strapped to their bridle reins—with a view of preventing their losing their horses in case of falls—he got

[1] Mr. Holyoake afterwards sold Clinker to Captain Ross for 600 guineas.

entangled in those of his adversary, but soon extricated himself, and went on at a killing pace. In attempting to catch him, it is generally considered that Douglas pumped the wind out of Radical, which occasioned him to fall at a small fence; and, by all accounts, his rider had a narrow escape of being seriously injured. Nothing daunted—for few men are harder or have better nerve—Douglas was in his saddle again, and charged a very large place (to get back into his line), which Radical cleared in a most workmanlike manner. His chance, however, was now out; Ross was gotten more than half a mile ahead of him; and when he passed me, about a mile from home—he was going quite at his leisure, not three parts speed.

'The scene at the Coplow beggars description. I can only compare it to a charge of cavalry, without the implements of destruction, although those who were in the thick of it were not free from danger. I never saw so much happiness depicted in one man's face as shewed itself in that of the winner, and the acclamations of his friends rent the air.

'That Captain Ross appeared the favourite of the field, truth compels me to state; and I think it was to be attributed, among others, to these causes:—first, the unassuming conduct he has invariably observed on the occasion; and secondly, to the great and never ceasing exertions of his friend Mr. Holyoake, to pull him well through. My old acquaintance, Mr. Frank Needham of Hungerton, exerted himself most powerfully in his favour, and no doubt his friends were pretty numerous on the ground.

'Some idea may be formed of the pace these gentlemen must have gone over the first part of the ground, when I state the fact, that the distance was performed by Clinker in eleven minutes thirty seconds;[1] although, as I have before stated, he was going quite at his ease for the last mile, or more. During this part of the race I rode by the side of, and conversed

[1] Captain Ross says the time 'by stop-watch was 11¼ minutes; a good pace over a very hilly country.'

with, my friend Captain Ross, who also appeared quite at his ease; and when he pulled up at the Coplow, I narrowly observed the state of his horse. There were no symptoms of fatigue; no tottering on his legs; no poking out his nose; no quivering of the muscles; no distress for wind; but he walked down the hill with his rider upon him, in full possession of his powers, and fit to have carried him over a large fence at the bottom of it. His condition, it must be allowed, was perfect.

'Not being able to be in two places at one time, I did not see Radical till some minutes after he had come in, when I perceived no symptoms of distress. He has all the appearance of a hunter, with immense powers in his thighs and hocks. He was ridden in a snaffle bridle, and I understand he will go in no other. Indeed, I should imagine from an expression of his late owner, that he is not every one's horse. . . .'

Concerning that incident at the gate, Captain Ross gave an account which puts it in a somewhat different light. The evening before the race, he says, Lord Kennedy sought an interview with him and, urging the desirability of leaving no loophole for misunderstanding, suggested that each rider should do just as he pleased. 'In short,' rejoined Captain Ross, 'I understand that we may ride over each other and kill each other, if we can. Is that so?' 'Just so,' was Lord Kennedy's answer. 'Odd enough,' continues Captain Ross, 'the first jump was a five-barred gate. I lay with Clinker's head about Douglas's knee. When within forty or fifty yards of the gate I saw clearly that Radical meant to refuse: so recollecting last night's bargain, I held Clinker well in hand. Radical, as I expected, when close to the gate turned right across Clinker. I stuck the spur in, knocked Douglas over the gate and sent Radical heels over head, and lying on this side of it.'

The foundation-stone of organised steeple-chasing was laid in 1830 when certain officers of the 1st Life Guards asked the well-known trainer 'Tommy' Coleman, then landlord of the

Chequers Inn, or Turf Hotel, at St. Albans, to arrange the matter. It was a thoroughly sporting affair: the 'articles' provided for a sweepstakes of 25 sovereigns, each horse to carry 12 stone over not less than four miles of fast hunting country, to be chosen by Coleman within forty miles of London. No rider was to be told the line until at the starting-post, and no rider to pass through an open gateway or traverse road or lane for more than 50 yards. Coleman chose a genuine point to point course, starting the field of fifteen from the hill where Harlington Church stands, the winning post being the Obelisk in Wrest Park near Silsoe. Here is 'The Druid's' account of the race:—'Coleman so managed the line, that he could start them, and then by making a short cut, judge them as well. Lord Ranelagh's grey horse Little Wonder, with Colonel Macdowell up, won the stake, which was worth about 300 sovereigns. The Colonel's orders were to watch nothing but Lord Clanricarde, who was on a little Irish chestnut; and one of the Berkeleys was third.[1] The rest found their way into the Park from all quarters; with the exception of poor Mr. Stretfield on Teddy the Tiler, who had a fall in jumping a gate back on to a bridge after he had missed his line, and died in consequence.'

Coleman's general idea of a steeplechase was two miles out and two miles in, and 'keeping the line quite dark.' Hence he concealed men in the ditches, with flags, which they raised at a given signal, as soon as the riders were ready. Other managers liked four miles straight, and after erecting scaffold poles, with a couple of sheets to finish between, they left the riders to hunt the country for their line, with no further directions than 'leave that church on your right, and the clump on your left, and get to the hill beyond.'

The St. Albans meeting lasted only a few years: its own success was its undoing. Steeple-chasing was a novelty, and such large and unmanageable crowds collected that the

[1] Lord Clanricarde's 'little Irish chestnut' was Nailer, who came in second: the Hon. A. Berkeley rode Mr. Wombwell's grey Rockingham.

farmers over whose land the sport took place rebelled, and in 1838 the last St. Albans race was run.

There had been a selling steeplechase at Aintree (nine runners; won by the Duke) in 1836, but, as 'The Druid' says, 'Liverpool began its Grand National in earnest' in 1839, and the glory that had been St. Albans' was translated to the Aintree course.

Commander W. B. Forbes, R.N., sends the following account of the Grand National of 1882, famous in the annals of the great race as having been won by a man who rode his own horse, after one of the closest finishes ever seen :—

'"That must be the happiest man on the top of the earth at the present moment," said the late Mr. John Watson to me in his own emphatic way, as we watched the mud-bespattered Lord Manners strip the saddle from the back of the gallant Seaman after the race. And though Lord Manners seemed very calm amid the uproarious cheering and overwhelming congratulations of those who crowded round him, I feel pretty sure that my old friend was right; for not to many comes, even once in a lifetime, the intense and satisfying joy that follows the accomplishment of some great deed upon which the heart is set.

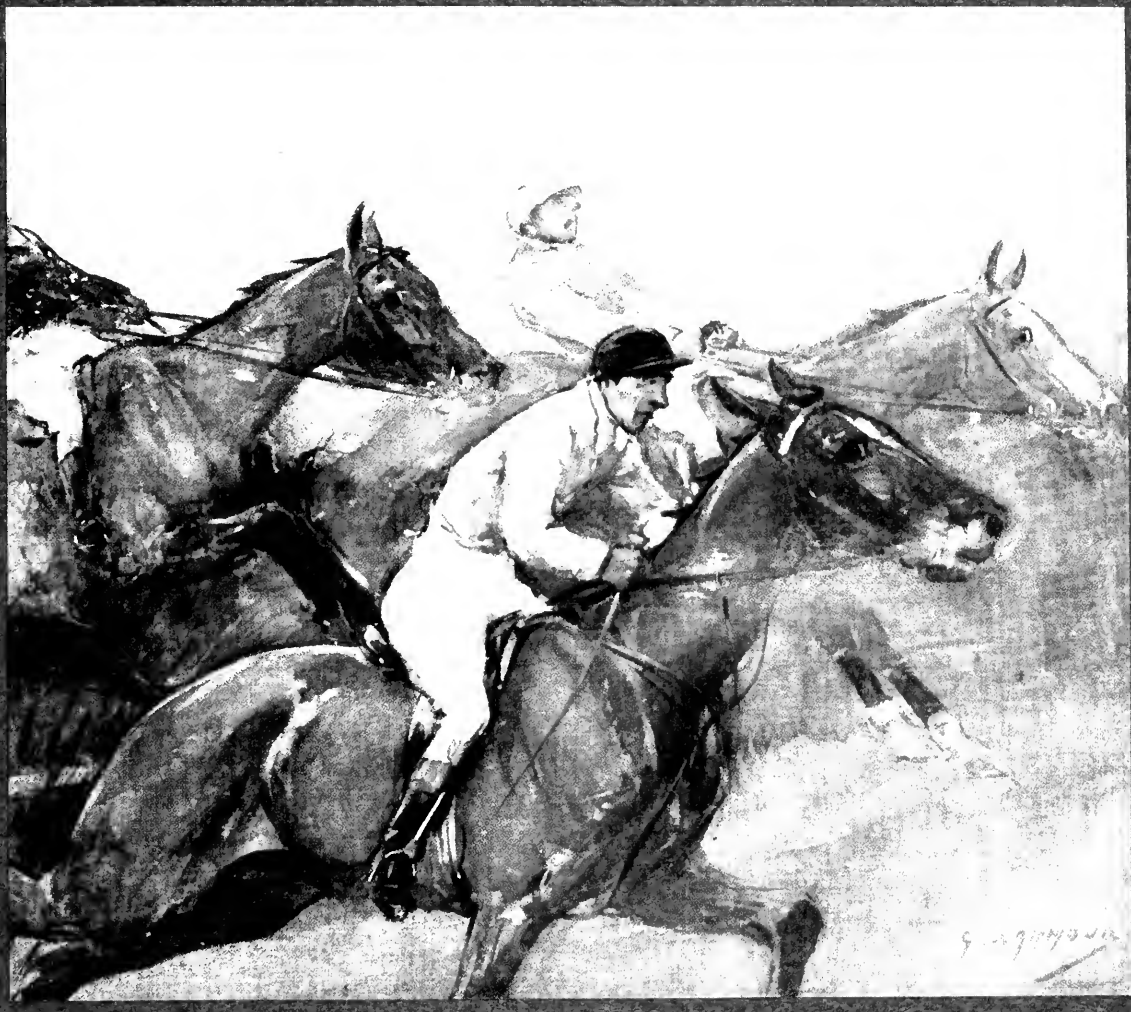
'Never shall I forget the scene as the owner-jockey emerged from the weighing room when "all right" had been pronounced after the most exciting struggle I ever witnessed on a steeplechase course. There were many circumstances connected with the race which made it in every way one of the most memorable contests on record: and not even when His Majesty's royal purple was borne first past the post on Ambush II was victory more popular. For it was known to all that Lord Manners, then a young Guardsman, 30 years of age, had purchased Seaman at a long figure for the express purpose of winning the Grand National with him and riding him himself; an idea, which, though it seemed quixotic to the British Public, caused the gallant Guardsman to become a popular idol when it was realised. Yet Lord Manners was not

the tyro at the game that he was generally represented to be, for he owned at least one other very good horse, also an Irish bred one and, like Seaman, from Linde's stable. This was Lord Chancellor, by the Lawyer out of Playfair, a six year old, on whom his Lordship had won the Grand Military Gold Cup at Sandown three weeks before; so the jockey was pretty fit, as a man must needs be to accomplish the proudest ambition of the soldier rider—to win the Gold Cup and the National in the same year. As a five year old Lord Chancellor had shown good form in Ireland; as a four year old, under the name of Pickpocket, he had won the Farmers' race at the Ward Hunt Meeting, and also the Bishopscourt Plate at Punchestown, with Mr. "Harry" Beasley in the saddle on both occasions. And now about the antecedents of the equine hero of the Grand National of 1882.

'In that year the Linde combination—Mr. Linde to train and the brothers Beasley to ride—was going very strong indeed. The stable with Empress and Woodbrook had won the two previous Grand Nationals, those of 1880 and 1881, while in 1879 poor Garrett Moore had done the trick on his own Liberator, and it almost seemed as if we were never again to see the winner of the great race trained and ridden by Englishmen.

'The Eyrefield Lodge master had seldom a stronger hand to play than was his when he threw away his trump card, and sold Seaman to Captain Machell for Lord Manners. But Mr. Linde was a very astute personage and knew that there was a "wonder" who was little known, and a couple of clinkers besides in his stable; while he doubted much if Seaman would stand a Grand National preparation—such a preparation, at least, as he was in the habit of bestowing upon his charges. Seaman, son of Xenophon and Lena Rivers, in 1882 was a six year old; he was not a very big horse nor had he the best of legs, indeed they showed signs of the Veterinary surgeon's art. He was a good bay, very deep over the heart and one of the gamest that ever looked through a bridle.

Steeple-Chasing



He made a memorable first appearance as a four year old in Ireland by winning the Members' Plate at Longford when there was a very bumping finish between Seaman, ridden by Mr. H. Beasley, and Mr. Croker's Sir Garnet, a crack four year old of the time, ridden by Mr. D. Murphy. The latter came in first by a neck, but was disqualified for unfair riding on Mr. Murphy's part.

'Next year (1881) Seaman rose to great fame by jumping the big fences like a deer, gaining at every fence and winning the Conyngham Cup at Punchestown by ten lengths with his pilot, Harry Beasley, looking back at his followers. It has not been often remarked, I think, that Lord Manners rode his own horse Grenadier in that Conyngham Cup, and here it was that he probably made his first acquaintance with Seaman, whose last race this was in the maroon and blue cap of Mr. Linde, for he crossed the channel and went into Captain Machell's care. But in the stable at Eyrefield remained a brace of five year olds with either of which Linde thought he might win another National. One of these was Cyrus, another son of Xenophon and an unlucky horse for Mr. Linde, the other Mohican by Uncas, the property of the late Major Ralph Bunbury, a most cheery and amusing sportsman, a friend of my own and one of the best men to hounds in Kilkenny. Mohican had won a Farmers' race in Kilkenny for Major Bunbury, but he won it by about a mile, and after the race poor Roddy Owen, then a subaltern at Cork, thought he saw a "soft thing" and asked Bunbury to put a price on his horse. "1000 golden sovereigns" instantly replied the hilarious owner. The fact was that Mohican had shown great speed on the flat when in training at the Curragh but had developed a "pain in his temper"—with the usual result. However he had grown into a slashing young dark brown horse, had an immense stride and was a tremendous jumper. Here was the trump card! His trial with Cyrus proved him a wonder, and I believe that he easily beat and gave weight to the horse that was to give him 2 lb. in the National.

Mohican, ridden by Harry Beasley, carried most of the money and started favourite in a field of 12 for the Grand National. Cyrus, 10 st. 9 lb., was ridden by Mr. T. Beasley. Seaman by Lord Manners, 11 st. 6 lb. Adams was on Liberator the '79 winner, Captain Smith was on "Zoedone" —the next year's winner: Frank Wynne steered "Black Prince," Mr. Thirlwell, "Eau de Vie": Jewitt rode the Scot: Waddington, Montauban: Mr. E. P. Wilson was on Fay: Andrews on Wild Monarch, and Sensier on Ignition. It will thus be seen that the pick of all the talent of the time was arrayed against the venturous Lord Manners.

'Very heavy rain had fallen, and the morning of March 23rd was as disagreeable as it often is at Aintree, the course in front of the stands was horribly muddy, and light misty rain almost obscured the canal turn. There was a murmur of applause when Seaman passed in the Parade, but in the canter Harry Beasley fetched Mohican a rib-binder to wake him up, a proceeding that I did not like, tho' his owner, who stood next to me, took it as a "matter of course." (I beg leave to say that no joke is intended!)

'There is nothing in racing that seems to me quite as exciting as the start for the National. When the flag fell away they went in splendid line into the dull grey distance. My little money was on the favourite, but Seaman's progress attracted me most and I watched through my glasses the splendid style in which he sailed over what used to be called "Fan's fence"; but thanks to the weather our glasses became of little use after that. Mohican fell at the big second fence into the country, taking off far too soon and dropping his hind legs into the far ditch, but Mr. Beasley rolled away unhurt; he was striding along in great form when he fell and looked the giant of the cluster that led. Seaman at the water covered a lot of space in his jump and Cyrus skimmed it "like a swallow on a summer's eve"; but the day grew darker as they turned and it was difficult to see more till they came round again for home. Then it was clear that two horses

were out by themselves. Though jackets and faces of riders were of one uniform mud-colour I recognised the neat seat of little Beasley and the other horse, I knew, was Seaman.

'Now at the Curragh three years later Fred Archer, having been beaten in the Welter race by Tommy Beasley on Spahi after a great set-to, declared that he had never seen an amateur who could ride as good a finish as his opponent. So here was the "tyro" pitted against this redoubtable race-rider in one of the most desperate finishes ever seen at Aintree. As they neared the last fence, however, my glasses showed me that Cyrus was a more beaten horse than Seaman, and Beasley took hold of him and resolutely drove him at it. I think the fences were then not so strongly made up as they seemed to be the last time I walked the course, for Cyrus fairly "mowed it," while Seaman jumped it clean and well. Once over, though, he hung a bit and lost some ground. Beasley was "at" his mount and level again with Seaman. Locked together they passed the stands, Lord Manners sitting still but riding out his horse with his hands. Beasley doing all he knew and squeezing the last ounce out of Cyrus, the last ounce, the absolutely last ounce! for on the very post he drops back the merest trifle and the race is Seaman's by the shortest of heads. "How did the Lord work?" I heard one of the Irish brigade ask the defeated jockey. "He made no mistake from first to last," was the quiet reply—"Don't I wish he had!" The gallant Seaman broke down after passing the post and came back on three legs to be greeted as I have described, having run his last race. The leg "held" just a little too long for Mr. Linde.'

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